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Into The Bush League

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by JOHN JUDIS and a Gathering of Dissenters

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■ Is the Market Necessarily Capitalist? ■ Could It Work with a Democratic Socialist Economy?

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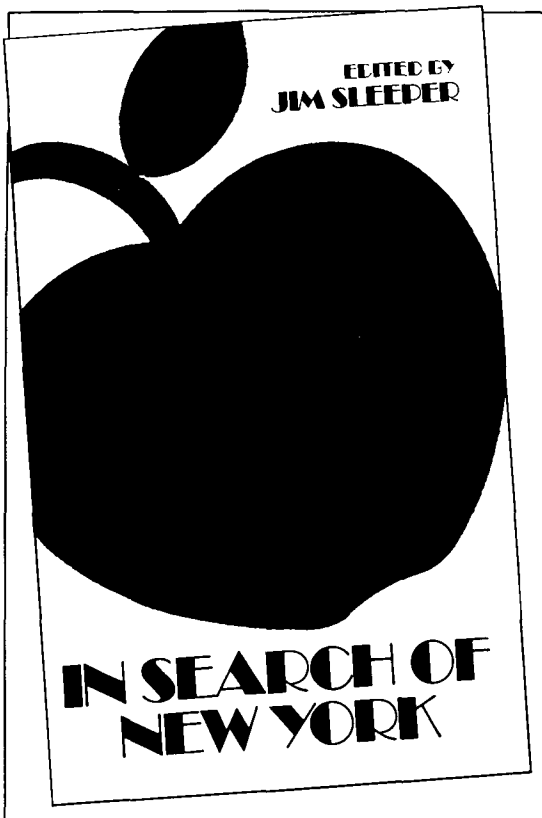

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Into the Bush Years

Here are a few comments by Dissent *editors and contributors on the current political situation. More will follow in later issues.*—EDS.

Irving Howe

Something of major importance happened in the recent presidential election, though it has its roots, of course, farther back in time. We are living through the degradation of democratic politics. The procedures of democracy remain intact, perhaps even improved, but the substance of democracy (popular participation, serious discussion, structured publics) is visibly shrinking. To look with dismay at the recent election is not at all to sentimentalize the American past; of course we have always had hoopla, demagoguery, ignorance, deceit; but now there really is something new and ominous.

Politics has become largely a function of advertising, advertising an accomplice or branch of television, and television a power that tilts politics more and more into the hands of the rich. Back in the days when political electioneering depended at least partly on lung-power, there could be a rough sort of equality of opportunity among competing candidates of unequal wealth—at least sometimes. Today, money talks and talks—consider a congressional race in Westchester County, New York, where each candidate spent $2,000,000. How could an ordinary person, let alone someone with unorthodox views, compete?

In some sophisticated circles it's become the fashion to dismiss as a cliché the view that television has become the dominant political mechanism. Well, perhaps it is a cliché, but clichés often harbor bits of truth. Television has reduced the public meeting to mere background for a few seconds on the evening news. Television has made a farce out of debate, with airhead questioners feeding candidates cues either pointless or hopelessly beyond answer in two minutes. Television proves that visual demagogy has by now surpassed the verbal kind—and you can buy it on Madison Avenue. Television dissolves coherent publics into isolated spectators or, worse still, into "experts" who judge which candidate "won" a debate or which has better posture. Inanities of television "experts" soon circulate as folk wisdom in bars and kitchens. Technique replaces opinion, and savvy, commitment.

No political candidate feels obliged to make, nor seems capable of making, a coherent half-hour speech advancing an idea. No candidate would dream of admitting there is anything about which he is not ready to express a packaged line. And as for admitting doubt, why, that would be political suicide, if not un-American.

Candidates are supposed to be potential leaders of the nation, yet their every word is managed by "handlers." Dan Quayle, whom fate might yet elevate to the presidency, was apparently guarded more closely than a prisoner in the Gulag. James Baker is declared a genius because he taught President-elect Bush the art of the low blow. Paris being worth a Mass, the presidency might well be worth a bad conscience, if one even supposes Mr. Bush to have that.

It is said there was a public reaction against the mindlessness and vulgarity of the presidential campaign, though not enough to convince the sharper "handlers" that mindlessness and vulgarity don't pay off. What is most troubling about these developments is that they don't stem merely from the all-too-familiar effectiveness of demagogy or from the programmed gullibility of many voters. What is disturbing is that the debasement of political life seems to be an offshoot of technological innovations that it would be hopeless to try to block but foolish to simply acquiesce in. The question to be faced is whether politics, like so many other areas of social life, has become prey to all-but-uncontrollable forces that drain human dignity and strip democracy of its value and meaning.

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I don't want to indulge in Spengleresque jeremiads. I remain a democrat in opinion and desire. I share just about all the suggestions for improvement that my colleagues make in the following comments, or those that other thoughtful people are making these days. But I don't see how any honest or sensible person, of whatever opinions, can fail to recognize that American democracy as a political system is in pretty sad shape. □

For further comment on the media and politics, see Jeremey Larner's "Culture Notes," page 109.

Fred Siegel

The presidential debacle of 1988 was anticipated more than a dozen years ago in an exchange between an aggressive Mike Dukakis, then riding high in his first term as governor of Massachusetts, and the last man with a common touch to win the Democratic nomination, Hubert Humphrey. Told that Dukakis the neoliberal had declared him obsolete, an angry Humphrey replied:

> "You know," he said, "there are two kinds of liberals. Dukakis is a process liberal, and I'm not. All he cares about is that the pipeline is neat and shiny and clean. He doesn't care if shit comes out the other end. But me, I don't care if the pipeline is cracked and rusty and shitty so long as the right results come out the other end. That's the difference between us!"

And what a difference it's been. The one thing we can say for sure is that on the basis first of Jimmy Carter and now of Mike Dukakis, the principled bloodlessness of neoliberalism is an electoral disaster.

Neoliberalism scored some of its greatest triumphs in reforming Congress, and there too the results are, albeit in a different way, disastrous. Freed by procedural purists from the malign influence of party, members of Congress proceeded to build individualized and unassailable electoral machines of their own. The effect, in part, is not only that 99 percent of the incumbents were reelected, 82 percent of all winners won by garnering *at least* 60 percent of the vote. Each congressional district now has its own one-party system. How about some *Perestroika* here at home?

Freed of party discipline, the congressional entrepreneurs are now subject to the "discipline" of the vote-buying market. The secret ballot was designed to prevent the rich from buying the votes of the masses. But more subtle forms of vote buying thrive, as with the fifty-eight congressmen running unopposed who nonetheless have received more than fourteen million dollars in PAC contributions. The upshot is public cynicism, a disdain for politics that encourages the further privatization of American life.

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Neoliberalism has failed, but it is by no means clear that the alternative served up by the Reverend Jackson can be more successful. Unpalatable as it may be for some party activists, victory lies with the 60 percent of the white population who found a couple of country club fops preferable to the pride of Harvard Yard.

It's unlikely that any activist Democrat can win the presidency, barring a Republican catastrophe, without first coming to grips with the problem before which both black and white Democratic mayors have been helpless—the problem of the underclass. The revival of full-blooded liberalism presaged by the 1986 election was aborted by growing fears of the lumpenproletariat. People who pronounced themselves "ready for a change" were frightened by rising fears of crime, embodied for many in the relatively unthreatening figure of the aggressive panhandler.

A great many things will be different for the 1992 election. For one thing the creation of a unified West European market with tariff barriers on American products will put the Republicans' free-market dogmatism to the test. But this aside, the Republicans have a great advantage. They have no need to deal with the seemingly insoluble problems of our dependent and sometimes criminal populations. The GOP thrives on the misery and fear spread by the underclass. The Democrats are not so fortunate: The path to power may well lie across the issue they are politically and intellectually frightened to face. □

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Jeffrey Scheuer

In the heat of the struggle each partisan is hurried beyond the natural limits of his opinions by the doctrines and the excesses of his opponents, until he loses sight of the end of his exertions, and holds forth in a way which does not correspond to his real sentiments or secret instincts. Hence arises the strange confusion that we are compelled to witness.

—Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

From April to August 1988, Michael Dukakis seemed all but elected president. His spectacular nosedive in the month following the Republican convention is the singular fact to be explained about the brutal and vacuous 1988 campaign. As for the end result, in retrospect it seems overdetermined, given peace abroad, a sufficiency of middle-class prosperity at home, and, most of all, the obvious failings of Dukakis's candidacy—his stubbornness, insularity from both the national and local parties, and the ineptitude of his television ads compared with the brilliantly squalid propaganda of his opponent. That's the real lesson, isn't it? Television corrupts absolutely; to use it effectively is to shame and abuse democratic values. Alexis de Tocqueville, meet Roger Ailes.

In further hindsight, Dukakis's retreat from liberalism to the sorry banner of "competence" was a strategic as well as a moral and intellectual blunder. (About that, if nothing else, Bush was right.) Seemingly neutered by his party's past defeats, and attempting to assemble an impossibly broad coalition, Dukakis abandoned his patrimony until the last desperate days. He also forgot to fight. In the words of Hunter S. Thompson, all Bush had to do was "hang tough and deny everything."

I don't see 1988 as proving the voguish notion that the GOP has an "electoral lock" on the presidency. That theory is at best misleading in its arithmetic emphasis. If anything, the Electoral College offers a slight potential advantage to Democrats: It would have been far easier for Dukakis than for Bush to win the electoral vote without a popular majority, by winning narrow victories in the twenty-plus competitive states while losing overwhelmingly in the South, the Great Plains, and the Rockies. As things stand, Republicans do have about two hundred electoral votes leaning strongly their way, compared with only a hundred or so for Democrats. But only some one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five are utterly out of a Democrat's reach. Dukakis lost narrowly in seven states with one hundred and twenty-five electoral votes, and got at least 45 percent of the vote in states with 313. Putting a Democrat in the White House remains a difficult proposition, but not a hopeless one.

The problem is not electoral votes, but voters; not "electoral lock," but "class lock." Liberal laws and programs from the Progressive Era to the New Deal to the Great Society represented an extraordinary promise to the American people: broad opportunity to join an ever-expanding middle class. But the partial fulfillment of that promise created a barrier to its completion; children of the New Deal have become Republicans. And in a perfectly just society, I suppose, so could we all. But getting there is the problem. As the leaky lifeboats of middle-class opportunity fill up, those on board pull up the ladders and shift their gaze to Republican yachts.

Yet precisely because the left promises so much to so many, it will always have both limits and possibilities. Many Americans have a strong aversion to the intellectual side of liberalism—its abstractness and complexity. But there is also a wide natural constituency for its promise, including anyone without a life membership in the middle class. It is not a liberalism encrusted in the past, or reinvented with Republican inner workings, or a specious "neoliberal" retrenchment. It is a robust, populist liberalism tied to genuine family values—child care, health care, education, jobs, housing—

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and appealing both to the shaky middle class and to those in the waters below.

Domestically, the election of George Bush signifies opportunities forgone—for binding the nation and keeping the lifeboats open. It also poses two obvious dangers: a decisive tilt to the right on the Supreme Court and the ghastly spectre of J. Danforth Quayle a handgun away from the presidency. □

Jim Chapin

When the election campaign of 1988 began nearly two years ago, most political analysts felt that it might be of great significance. After all, it was the first election since 1960 in which the presidential nomination of both parties was to be up for grabs. Important choices would have to be made, both by the parties and the electorate. The campaign ended, of course, with both activists and electorate disappointed. In the end the election of 1988, like that of 1984, changed very little.

Who deserves the blame? Bush, for winning the only way he could? The media, for its increasingly poor coverage? The Democrats, for providing another in their series of presidential debacles?

One theory holds that the entire responsibility for the Democratic failure rests on Michael Dukakis, the man who led the polls at one point by 17 percent and yet found himself behind by 17 percent just eleven weeks later. But his 46 percent of the national vote was the second highest percentage for his party since 1964. The only Democrats in this century to win an absolute majority of the popular vote were Roosevelt and Johnson. The corpse of New Deal democracy has been dug up and reburied ever since 1948, but in fact it barely survived the death of Franklin Roosevelt (remember the election of 1946?). Finally, it must be remarked that the combination of peace and prosperity, a popular president, and a Republican party that at the presidential level has been a majority party for nearly twenty years hardly made an auspicious combination for any Democratic candidate.

The widely shared summer assumption of a victory for Dukakis rested only on the assurance of Bush's incompetence. Given that that assumption was partly false, it should be realized that it was not just Dukakis who lost this election but also Bush who won it. Bush, like Reagan, has been underestimated throughout his political career.

On the other hand, one should not hasten to absolve Dukakis of his failings. It was possible for a Democrat to win; just conceive of a ticket of (a Donna Riceless) Gary Hart and John Glenn, which might easily have won three hundred-plus electoral votes. Dukakis, if nothing else, convinced most of those who knew him that he would have made a more rigid, detail-oriented, and maze-dull president than Jimmy Carter.

In a lesser sense, much of the news for the Democrats is encouraging. The so-called Republican "electoral lock" proved meaningless. Had Dukakis gotten 1 percent more of the vote he would have exceeded two hundred electoral votes. With 50 percent of the popular vote he would have gotten exactly half the electoral votes. While Democrats failed to break the southern part of the new Republican coalition, they finally reversed their Kennedy-Carter collapse in the West. The tendency for young voters to be more Republican than the rest of the population ended.

Party alignments are almost exactly the reverse of what they were early in the century, and that holds promise for the Democrats. The argument that Democrats must carry the South misses the pattern of the old Republican majorities of 1880–1928, when the Republicans won nine of thirteen elections while cracking the South only in two.

That's not to say that the Democrats can't blow it; their internal party debate over the next four years will be between partisans of Sam Nunn and Jesse Jackson, two men who couldn't get their party's nomination and couldn't win the election if they did. A winning Democrat will not be found in either the Democratic Leadership Council or the Rainbow Coalition.

As for the past election, the differences between the candidates were less important than their similarities. All four candidates were millionaires for the first time in American history. The ideological hoopla was increased because real differences on major policies were so small. The mass public is caught between elites that appear to be essentially meretricious, but the Democratic party elites in academia, the social services, and the legal profession seem to most of the country more dispensable than the elites of businessmen, doctors, and the military for whom the Republican party speaks.

Liberalism defined as economic liberalism did reasonably well (although it is not a majority creed); but defined as cultural liberalism (ACLU, the flag, and Willie Horton), it was a disaster. Unfortunately

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for the Democratic party, it is today more a party of cultural than of economic liberals. That's why Dukakis won the nomination in the first place. The potential power of a broader sort of liberalism can be seen in the often overlooked *positive* side of the Bush campaign, which focused on a Democratic rather than a Reaganite issues agenda: peace, jobs, education, and environment. As Mary McGrory pointed out, even in Mississippi right-wing GOP Congressman Trent Lott won his election as senator by campaigning like a member of the Democratic Study Group. Americans have always been ideological conservatives and operational liberals. Their doubts about economic liberalism now concern not its goals but its competence.

Of perhaps greater importance is that the political process is now bourgeois in an ultimate sense: Politics conceived of only as an expression of *selling* has gone further than anyone could have imagined. Money and advertising are now the near totality of the election process. If politics is just another form of spectator sports, the idea of a positive national agenda for government itself becomes questionable.

Since the times themselves seem to demand such an agenda, the prospects of George Bush's being able to govern seem limited. Like Truman in 1948, he won his election by appealing to issues of the past. Truman, despite his exaltation in historical memory, was the least popular president in the history of American polling and was knocked out of the reelection process in 1952. And the last sitting vice-president to succeed his president by election was Martin Van Buren, hit by the Depression of 1837, and then smashed for reelection by a Whig party that finally learned from the Democrats how to use the then-new techniques of campaign advertising: newspapers, handbills, and stump speeches. □

Michael Harrington

The democratic left does not feel defeated in the aftermath of the 1988 elections, primarily because Dukakis did not raise populist Democratic issues until the last three weeks of the campaign. Once he did, he made real progress.

To be sure, this attitude could be used to rationalize political nonsense, i.e., the claim that a genuinely populist campaign would have easily triumphed despite the fact that "peace and prosperity" issues favored the Republicans and a refusal to recognize that Bush's attack on the liberal social engineers was both populist and very effective, and so on. Still, this is not the horrible morning after of 1984, when sheer empty-mindedness achieved a landslide. Three days after the vote, about eight hundred people jammed into a Democratic Socialists of America National Board meeting in Los Angeles to cheer a call to action.

What action?

First, the political conjuncture in Washington holds out the possibility of some immediate, if modest, gains. Bush and his closest associates are closet moderates and, even though beholden to Republican Neanderthals, might be willing to make at least some compromises with the enhanced Democratic majorities on Capitol Hill. That silver lining comes, however, with a cloud: that those compromises might be located on the sophisticated right of center and give the dangerous impression that something really is being done about issues like day care and parental leave (more on this ambiguity in a moment).

Second, assuming that there is no economic crisis in 1989, there is a serious, achievable left agenda. It begins, of course, with a drive for gains in both strategic and conventional arms reduction, where all the appropriate bows can be made to the very real accomplishment of Reagan's INF treaty. But beyond that national consensus, it mut also fight against Star Wars and some of the other destabilizing and wasteful military outlays like the Rapid Deployment Force and the six-hundred-ship navy. Here the left must speak in the name of *real* national security, for unilateral initiatives but not for unilateralism. Why Michael Dukakis allowed Bush to slander as "unilateralist" the Nuclear Freeze, which was for a bilateral, verifiable, negotiated freeze on the model of the Reagan treaty, is one of the puzzles in the recent campaign.

Contra aid is probably dead and should be buried. In the spring, however, there may well be a right-wing victory in the Salvadoran elections and the Duarte excuse for military aid will no longer exist. We must be prepared to mount a serious campaign for a political solution of a conflict neither side can win, as against "anticommunist" support to the oligarchy and its death squads.

On social and environmental issues, there are possibilities for gains. The question of day care has become so imperative that not only Bush but even

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Orrin Hatch wants to do something. And therein lies a problem. The Republicans have already been talking of a "voucher" approach, of providing totally inadequate assistance to individuals who will then buy care in a "free"—and sometimes dangerously unregulated—market. That is a palliative in the worst sense of the word. Similarly, the push for a serious law in support of parenting could be diverted into a minimal, and even hurtful, compromise. The political moral? That the left has to push the liberal Democrats to be sure that any deals contain substantial gains.

The Supreme Court nomination fights of the next years will, to assert the obvious, be critical and difficult and the first line of the defense of reproductive rights.

The Dukakis campaign did focus some attention on the thirty-seven million Americans without health insurance (to which one should add another twenty million or so with inadequate care). Here I see a dilemma, and I'm not sure how to handle it. The Dukakis (and Ted Kennedy) proposals to mandate health insurance for all jobs and buy public care for those who fall out of this net are a response to the issue and, after fifteen years of failure on national health itself, possibly a winnable response. But they are open to serious criticism because of the employment disincentives and the tendency to view care as a cost rather than a good. Is a flawed victory better than a principled defeat? I don't know yet where I stand.

It is clear that there will be a renewed push on the deficit—Wall Street and the international money markets are already insistent—and there will be a drive to cut entitlements, including an attack on the universality of Social Security. Here there is no ambiguity—and winning is difficult. Our principle is the one brilliantly enunciated by Jeff Faux: Let those who attended the debt-financed "party" of the last eight years pay the bills. Concretely, the Jackson proposal at the Democratic convention makes great sense. Let us simply restore tax rates to their 1977 levels, i.e., take back the bonanza to the rich.

A last, nonlegislative item. The victory of unionism at Harvard—and the militant "Justice for Janitors" campaign of the Service Employees' International Union—are signs that there is life in the labor movement and the possibility of moving in both the old and the new service sectors. Now is the time for the democratic left to reassert its commitment to labor.

Finally, if an economic crisis does break out, it could be extremely nasty because of the shaky structure of national, corporate, private, and international debt. But it also means that countermeasures will be subjected to the constraints of that debt. Gramm-Rudman is, after all, not simply a bad law but also a recognition of the success of David Stockman's attempt to curtail progressive innovation by mortgaging the welfare state. A recession could shatter the Reagan-Thatcher pipe dream that they have found a new road to permanent, crisis-free prosperity, and the left will then able to say triumphantly, We told you so. But what do we then *do*? One of our most important tasks in the next period is to think through an answer to that question.

But with a crisis or without, there is plenty for the left to do. □

Anniversary Issue

To celebrate our 35th Anniversary, *Dissent* will publish this spring a special, enlarged issue. Here are some of the projected contents:

Irving Howe—*The Life of Our Time: Thirty-five Years*
Lewis Coser—*The Collapse of the Communist Movement*
Daniel Bell—*The Postindustrial Revolution*
Michael Harrington—*Toward the New Socialism*
Joanne Barkan—*Sweden: A Firsthand Report*
Robert Kuttner—*The Waning of American Power?*
Dennis Wrong—*End of the Cold War?*
Ann Snitow—*Inner Strains of Feminism*

and more, more, more, more.

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John B. Judis

CAN THE DEMOCRATS WIN AGAIN?

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Michael Dukakis's electoral college defeat was of landslide proportions, but in its contours one could still see the outline of future Democratic victories. Over the last three elections the Democrats have steadily increased their vote in the Northeast, the farm-industrial Midwest, and the far West. They have also maintained a strong local base throughout the South. With a suitably ecumenical candidate and a less than buoyant economy, they could easily capture something resembling the old progressive Republican majority, stretching from New England to the Pacific Rim.

But the Democrats could have a hard time producing a candidate and a platform capable of unifying its highly divided electorate. As a congressional party, the Democrats' strength lies in their political, social, and regional diversity. But as a presidential party, this strength has been its weakness. The party has consistently nominated candidates who have driven large numbers of working-class Democrats into Republican hands. The Republicans have not won presidential elections; the Democrats have lost them.

This year's election was no exception. Millions of working-class voters in states like Michigan, Ohio, and New Jersey voted for liberal Democratic congressional candidates, but against Dukakis. In the Midwest, for instance, CBS polls found that voters with family incomes of $25,000 to $35,000 went 57 to 43 percent for Bush and 51 to 45 percent for Democratic congressional candidates. In Michigan, Bush won over 40 percent of the vote among union households. The Democrats cannot hope to build a majority without these working- and middle-class voters. But the Dukakis campaign and much of the Democratic policy elite displayed an astonishing indifference toward their concerns.

Dukakis would have had a difficult time winning no matter what kind of campaign he ran. On Bush's side was considerable experience in national government, Ronald Reagan's popularity, a falling unemployment rate, and the steady reduction of cold war hostilities with the Soviet Union. But Dukakis ensured his own defeat by allowing Bush to define the election as a replay of the 1972, 1980, and 1984 presidential elections.

Since 1932, the Democrats' political appeal has been based on standing for the average person against the banker, the corporate executive, and the idle rich. When the Democrats were able to frame the issue in these terms—for instance, in 1982, when they ran against a Republican recession and an administration plan to cut Social Security—they won.

But since 1968, the Republicans have taken advantage of the divisions in the Democratic electorate that followed upon the civil rights movement, the Vietnam war, the women's movement, and other sixties movements. They have developed a sociocultural populism that has enabled them to draw away white, middle-class Democrats. The Republicans have portrayed themselves as defenders of the white middle class against a Democratic alliance between ghetto blacks and the "new class" of countercultural bureaucrats, bra-burning feminists, and Sandinista supporters.

The Republicans have not relied merely on social issues like crime and abortion; they have redefined what are properly economic and foreign policy issues, from the tax revolt to the strategically insignificant invasion of Grenada. Each issue has become a battle in what historian Christopher Lasch has called the "cultural civil war." Even the liberal Democratic demand for full employment has come to be seen through the prism of racial conflict as a demand that the white middle class pay for "black freeloaders."

To defeat Bush, Dukakis would have had to focus the campaign away from the cultural civil war and back toward traditional Democratic economic issues. When Dukakis finally began to draw economic class lines at the end of the election, he surged and almost caught Bush in the industrial Midwest. But Dukakis faced two obstacles in executing this strategy. First, as Natalie Davis, a Democratic pollster in Birmingham, Alabama, discovered, even voters who believed that Dukakis and not Bush was "on their side" economically tended still to vote for Bush

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because they were more concerned with flag and crime than with bread-and-butter economics.

Second, Dukakis himself was initially unwilling to raise the economic issue in terms that appealed to populist or class-based Democratic sentiments. This reflected Dukakis's own political inclination. He has never been a populist, and his financial base has been among high-tech entrepreneurs and Wall Street financiers, neither of whom favor campaigns against corporate greed or unfair trade practices. His top economic adviser, Harvard professor Lawrence Summers, was a protegé of Martin Feldstein, the former chairman of Reagan's Council of Economic Advisors.

Moreover, Dukakis and leading Democratic activists and donors largely fit the profile that Republicans drew of them. They stand resolutely on one side of the cultural "civil war." For instance, according to CBS surveys, only 22 percent of Democratic convention delegates favor school prayer compared to 67 percent of Democratic voters. Fifty-seven percent of the delegates favor federal funding for welfare abortions compared to 32 percent of Democratic voters. Yet, it's important to note, these Democratic activists display less rather than more animosity toward corporations than do the average Democrats. According to a *Washington Post* poll, 67 percent of Democratic delegates (including the Jackson as well as Dukakis delegates) thought corporations had too much power compared to 79 percent of all Democrats and 73 percent of all voters.

Dukakis's posture toward working- and middle-class Democrats was further reinforced by Democratic policy makers and professionals. Over the last eight years, Democratic policy makers have devised programs that seemed to be directed primarily at the very poor and the very rich, but not at the middle class. For instance, the Bradley-Gephardt tax reform plan—the most heralded Democratic program of the mid-eighties—would have benefited primarily the poor and the wealthy, and the current Democratic favorite, the ABC Child Care bill, would have required that working-class Catholics use secular, credentialed facilities rather than church-run centers in order to receive benefits.

Democratic professionals have consistently refused to take the Republicans' cultural appeal seriously. This is particularly true as regards racial politics. In an interview last spring, Peter Hart, who did polling for Walter Mondale in 1984, insisted that race was not a factor in Mondale's abysmal showing in the South. "Our problem with southern whites was not racial, it was taxes and defense," Hart said.

Hart also claimed that the extensive poll of eighteen-to-forty-four-year-olds that he did for *Rolling Stone* this spring demonstrated that among this group "race relations tend to be very progressive." But a glance at the poll suggests otherwise. When Hart asked what their social goal for the next president was, a plurality of 46 percent said "stop people from abusing the welfare system"—a goal clearly freighted with racial connotations.

At a workshop on the fall elections at the Democratic convention last July, former Mondale campaign manager Bob Beckel—inexplicably elevated to guru status by the television networks—insisted that an association with Jesse Jackson could not take votes away from the Democratic nominee. "This notion that Jesse Jackson is going to scare away Democrats is silly," Beckel said. "Those people who would not vote for Dukakis because of Jackson are Republican voters." But as reporters who covered the campaign can testify, many whites who identify themselves as Democrats were turned off by Dukakis because they believed he made some kind of secret deal with Jackson.

Dukakis's campaign staff and Dukakis himself understood that Jackson could cost them votes among white Democrats, but they initially refused to recognize that Willie Horton, the Pledge of Allegiance controversy, and the American Civil Liberties Union could damage his candidacy. Like Hart and Beckel, Dukakis's staff displayed a kind of detachment from ordinary, middle-class America. They appeared to believe that America was Cambridge writ large.

The Republicans don't make this kind of mistake. While the national Democrats assume a kind of cultural universality—their values are everybody's values—the upper-class Republicans understand that they are different from the common run of Americans, and they cynically construct campaigns designed to appeal to them. This is what the Bush campaign did successfully in 1988.

In the wake of Dukakis's defeat, the main party factions, which had slumbered since the Atlanta convention, began to battle over the party's future. Jesse Jackson and his supporters told reporters that Democrats should not focus on winning "Reagan Democrats" but rather on creating a "coalition of have-nots." Jackson has done nothing to dispel the impression that he is already running for president in 1992.

Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, Virginia Senator-elect Chuck Robb, and other leaders of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) took Dukakis's defeat as further proof that the party "should move to the middle" on such issues as defense and the economy. Since mid-October, when Dukakis's

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defeat had seemed certain, DLC leaders had been thinking about whom to run in 1992. Robb's smashing victory in Virginia has stirred rumors of his own candidacy.

However, neither strategy has much to recommend it. Jackson's strategy is based on two absurdities. First, it assumes that Jackson himself could win the presidency. Whatever his merits, Jackson remains and will remain anathema to many middle-class whites. He is not seen as a conventional politician but as a militant protest leader who will foment racial conflict. (Jackson has contributed to this impression by eschewing election to lower office and by prolonging his presidential campaigns well past the point at which victory was conceivable.) In the Democratic primaries, Jackson drew most of his white votes from college towns and upper-middle-class communities.

Second, the Jackson strategy assumes that the Democrats can write off the "Reagan Democrats" and win by mobilizing nonvoters. Jackson supporter Linda Williams said after the election, "The Reagan Democrats have become Republicans, and it's time the party faces up to that fact." But the Reagan Democrats are the working-class voters who elect Democratic House members and Senators. The Democrats cannot abandon them without abandoning their working-class base and any hope of a majority.

As for the promise of nonvoters, it is highly exaggerated. Most polls show that nonvoters vote substantially the same as voters. Even if one assumed the highly unlikely—a 20 percent increase in black turnout, all going to the Democrats, coupled with no change in white turnout—Jackson would have increased his own total by only one and a half percent.

The DLC strategy is equally open to question. Robb and Nunn, the main DLC leaders, both represent prosperous states that are extremely dependent upon defense spending. Their promilitary message has worked during a time of Soviet-American tension, but may become anachronistic in the Gorbachev years; and their conservative economics, oriented toward balancing budgets, will be of little use to Democratic presidential candidates. Indeed, during the 1988 campaign, the DLC's main issue was a VISTA-style "citizens corps" that young people could enter in order to fund their education—an interesting idea but one that could hardly sway majorities.

The clash between Jackson and the DLC recalls the Democratic party battles of the twenties when Al Smith, the champion of the urban immigrant "wets," faced off against William Gibbs McAdoo, the representative of the rural Protestant supporters of Prohibition and the Ku Klux Klan. Like Smith, Jackson represents a social movement and not simply a political constituency. Like him, he also remains tied in voters' imagination to his roots. In 1924, Smith and McAdoo battled to a standstill after 103 convention ballots. In 1928, Smith finally got the nomination only to be slaughtered by Herbert Hoover in the general election.

The Democrats of the twenties, like the Democrats of the eighties, were divided primarily by cultural rather than economic issues. Like the current Democrats, they did much better in state and local elections, where candidates could adjust their messages to the prevailing assumptions of their constituents. Like the Democrats today, the twenties Democrats were steadily building the foundations of a new majority even while being defeated.

The Democrats of the twenties did not finally resolve their differences. They transcended them. The depression focused voters' attention on jobs rather than alcohol and immigration, and the Democrats nominated a candidate, Franklin Roosevelt, who could not be fitted into either of the old factions. A rural Protestant and a dry, Roosevelt had nonetheless backed Smith in 1924 and 1928. In 1932, his slogan was "Bread, not booze."

Today's Democrats must also transcend their differences. If Jackson finally succeeds in winning the nomination, he will lose everything except the District of Columbia, even against a weak opponent. If one of the DLC moderates gets the nomination, he might just possibly win, but he will not be able to build a new majority. It would be as if John Nance Garner, and not Roosevelt, had won in 1932—leaving the way open to a "progressive" Alf Landon and a resurgent Republicanism in 1936.

If the Democrats carry their feud over the next four years, the results could be even worse than electoral defeat. It could replicate the split within the British Labour party—a split that has ensured two decades of Tory rule. Worse still, a split involving Jackson would have a nasty racial edge that cuts deeper than any differences between left and center. The Democrats could then be finished as a majority party.

In the Democratic party, the left has historically sought to create a majority coalition committed to economic democracy, but the different parts of the current left have carried out this mission very poorly. After the 1980 election, the labor movement

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decided to increase its influence in the party by endorsing a single presidential candidate. Its endorsement of Mondale in 1984 alienated other candidates and made Mondale appear to be a pawn of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

In 1988 the labor movement, divided among different candidates, endorsed no one, which meant that individual unions could not endorse. This policy probably doomed the candidacy of Representative Richard Gephardt, the candidate closest to many of the unions and one who might have beaten Bush. After using a populist message to win Iowa, Gephardt was predictably unable to raise funds from Wall Street or radical chic Democrats to compete in Super Tuesday, and his friends in the labor movement were powerless to help him. Labor would clearly be better off going back to its laissez-faire days.

Some organizations and publications that identify with the left really are battalions in the cultural civil war. They exacerbate differences within the party rather than seeking to resolve and transcend them. This is certainly true of the Hollywood left—an important source of campaign funds—and of publications like *Rolling Stone* and the *Village Voice*. For instance, the *Voice*, when it interviewed Jackson, was most interested in his position on Nicaragua. They wanted to know whether, beyond opposing American intervention, he also positively backed the Ortega regime; in interviewing Dukakis, the *Voice* was most concerned about why, is assigning foster children to homes, he was giving heterosexual families priority over homosexual couples.

Leftwing publications like the *Nation* endorsed Jackson during the primaries. Other publications like *In These Times* and *Mother Jones* made no formal endorsements but were clearly more sympathetic to his candidacy than to that of other Democrats. Some of these organizations and publications appeared indifferent to the fact that Jackson's candidacy split the Democrats and the left's own natural constituency. Others tried to convince themselves that Jackson's increased vote among whites represented an ongoing evolution that would result eventually in a majority vote. The *Nation* extolled Jackson's candidacy for "expanding and recapturing the party's base."

In the wake of the election, some of these leftists are now lining up with Jackson's faction, like soldiers in Cromwell's army of the Lord. Writing in *In These Times*, three prominent left-wing activists, John Atlas, Peter Dreier, and Tom Gallagher, presented a strategy for the left that amounts to building a permanent organized political faction for Jackson in the Democratic party: "The Jackson campaign laid the foundation for an effective, ongoing progressive coalition that could survive the November election and become an important force within the country's politics."

The American right was never this obtuse. After Barry Goldwater was routed in 1964, conservatives continued to revere Barry Goldwater, but they recognized that he was not a viable national leader. When Ronald Reagan ran for governor of California in 1966, the conservatives who recruited him insisted that he hire Stuart Spencer, who had run Nelson Rockefeller's primary campaign against Goldwater in 1964. They also told Reagan to stay

To Our Contributors:

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(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your ms—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility. No dot matrix submissions, *please*.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

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clear of Goldwater and of the more provocative right-wing stands. Reagan did, he won, and he accomplished almost everything that Goldwater would have wanted to do.

The Democrats and the left stand on a very similar threshold. A majority beckons, and a politics has already begun to cohere—partly through the efforts and the eloquence of Jackson. But those who insist that all Democrats must adhere to their own cultural agenda or those who insist that only Jackson can represent their politics risk destroying Democrats' chance of ever creating a national majority. □

Nancy Kleniewski

URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A New Battleground

In the past fifteen years, the health of the local economy has become *the* pressing urban policy issue. Although the older manufacturing cities are most in need of an energetic policy, the issue is a top priority for virtually every city administration. A review of city strategies reveals a common wisdom on economic development. Development policy that stresses manufacturing is derided as "smokestack chasing" while local governments pursue tourists, shoppers, and corporate offices. Furthermore, most cities are willing to provide hefty public subsidies to stimulate that kind of private investment in their downtown areas.

Consider the following examples:

- Brooklyn's Albee Square Mall, a shopping center constructed in an abandoned theater, was financed by an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG);
- The Grand Avenue Mall in downtown Milwaukee, a $70 million project, had nearly half of its costs paid by the city and federal governments, in the form of UDAG and Community Development Block Grant funding;
- New York City's South Street Seaport has received more than $20 million in public aid;
- The City of Syracuse has spent $4 million to buy twenty-nine rooms in an "investment condominium" being built by Syracuse University for campus conferences;
- The Copley Place project in Boston, combining retailing and office space with a hotel, convention center, and apartments, was partially financed by an $18 million UDAG obtained for it by the City of Boston;
- Another mixed-use development, Town Center in Charleston, West Virginia, was helped along by the local authorities, who issued $24.5 million worth of tax-free revenue bonds to raise capital for its construction.

These projects are all examples of the much touted public-private partnerships using public investment to attract private investment. Although public-private cooperation is the common theme underlying *all* economic development, programs vary widely in their emphasis on private profit vs. public benefit. Three of the most common strategies are described below. Each tends to stress private profit, responding to the "needs" of investors; each, however, has inherent problems that make it less than ideal for cities.

One common strategy is to target growth areas in the economy and attempt to increase the city's share of those activities. Because tourism leads the list of growth sectors, many cities are creating "amenity infrastructures"—convention centers, marinas, museums, and luxury hotels. Back-office corporate operations, which cities support by subsidizing new office space and enhancing commuter transportation facilities, belong in the same category. Although this seems logical enough, this strategy does not always work. First, competition among cities for these growth industries is fierce. Furthermore, even when cities are able to capture these industries, much of the employment so generated is in low-wage clerical, sales, janitorial, or food-service jobs.

In another familiar development strategy, cities provide incentives to existing businesses to remain in the city. These include tax abatements, land write-downs, free buildings, and publicly supported financing through tax-free bonds. Businesses have come to expect them and so can threaten cities with moving, thereby extracting ever increasing concessions. This threat can amount to blackmail, as in the notorious case of the General Motors plant in Detroit, and the less well-known cases of the New York Stock Exchange and the Philadelphia Eagles

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football team. Or, as happened with Playskool in Chicago, companies can take the incentives and leave anyway.

The third strategy, used mainly by older industrial cities, is to compete with new cities and suburban areas by imitating them physically and socially. Such cities have widened their streets, added parking facilities, and reduced their density by building taller structures surrounded by open space. They have built enclosed shopping malls to compete with their suburban counterparts. Cities have even tried to "copy" the suburbs by encouraging gentrification of poor and working-class neighborhoods. What emerges, however, is a garrison-like upper-middle-class compound surrounded by a ring of economically depressed areas, a mirror image of urban-suburban income inequality. Despite the apparent drawbacks of these strategies, cities adopt them with such regularity as to prompt an inquiry into why.

One reason is that they face similar economic conditions resulting from the economic reshuffling of the 1970s and 1980s. Those cities that were hurt the most had economies based on large-scale manufacturing. Between 1970 and 1980, for example, cities like St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland lost from 20 percent to 30 percent of their populations. The "gritty cities," however, were not alone in losing manufacturing jobs; both heavy and light industry in every region of the country suffered declines, with reduced urban tax bases.

Changing political conditions have also affected cities' responses to economic problems. Over the past decade, national urban policy has undergone a series of programmatic and ideological shifts with the expressed aim of returning autonomy to local governments. The most prominent of these shifts was the institution of Community Development Block Grants and the demise of such urban programs as the Urban Renewal program. The Reagan administration has encouraged this direction.

Despite the rhetoric of local autonomy and freedom of choice, however, federal urban policy currently supports a relatively narrow range of local initiatives. The centerpiece of the Reagan plan for the cities is the Enterprise Zone. Blocked as national legislation, it has been passed (in modified form) by more than twenty states. Another policy used to aid "distressed" urban areas is the Urban Development Action Grant (although this may be eliminated from the current federal budget). Both Enterprise Zones and UDAGs are public subsidies to private companies to entice them to locate or expand in particular geographic areas. The difference is that Enterprise Zones target areas on the basis of poverty while UDAGs target projects on the likelihood of leveraging private funds for them. Because these are the only two major economic development tools available to cities, it is not surprising that there are so many similarities in the approaches cities are taking.

Similar economic and political conditions explain some similarities in how cities choose strategies for economic development. But another factor is the set of assumptions that public officials bring to the analysis of their problems. The range of policies cities use is constricted by the limits of what city officials think can be achieved. This is based only partly on political reality. Unfortunately, within most communities, planners and officials share the same view.

Cities have traditionally approached economic development problems through a growth model that equates economic viability with the growth of private investment. It assumes that employment, property taxes, and all local revenues are derived only from increases in private investment. Presumably private economic growth would increase public revenues.

Although this growth model has achieved the status of folk wisdom, evidence is mounting that it is inadequate for understanding local economies. For example, a major study by David Birch found that increases in capital investment by firms do not necessarily lead to proportional increases in employment. Investigation also suggests that, in granting tax abatements to investors, cities may not generate sufficient growth in the local economy to compensate for revenues passed up, resulting in net decreases in income to the cities. Analysts such as Robert Goodman also argue that as more cities compete by offering economic incentives, the advantage for any individual city is diminished.

The growth model, although dominant, is not the only existing philosophy of economic development. An alternative approach, one stressing social return for public investment, is becoming increasingly prominent. This model examines what planners call the "distributive effects" of policy actions, judging policies according to what benefits they may provide to those who need them most. For example, companies receive public subsides not for increasing overall employment but for hiring targeted populations (e.g., minorities, young people, displaced workers), providing on-the-job training, or otherwise benefiting economically deprived groups.

The social-return model assumes that public investment should have a public return. Decisions about projects are based not on the goals set by the private sector but on the private sector's cooperation in meet-

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ing goals set by community leaders and public officials. For example, a city can require that any subsidized firm provide public facilities such as recreational space or public services such as day care. The city can also use its own investments to increase the level of public goods and services available (e.g., municipal ownership of utilities, parking garages, and health care facilities), rather than using city money to subsidize private operations.

This approach holds that the role of public policy is to protect and enhance the common good against the potential abuses of private enterprise. Several different issues arise here. One is the quality of the natural environment: public incentives can be used in a way that prevents (or compensates for) increases in pollution, congestion, and use of natural resources produced by development. Another is the quality of the built environment: building heights and ground coverage can be limited, public as well as private space can be provided, historic structures can be protected. A third issue involved is the social balance of population: measures can be taken to ensure that a mix of incomes, ages, and ethnic groups can coexist in a city. Many of these are reaffirmations or extensions of traditional zoning and planning policies; unfortunately, they have been eroded in the competition to give incentives to the private sector. Battles over building height limits in San Francisco and Philadelphia and air rights in New York are cases in point.

The social-return model is a viable policy that has already been used effectively. One of its most prominent advocates is Norman Krumholz, former city planning director of Cleveland. Krumholz used what he calls "equity planning" to ensure socially responsible results by increasing choices for residents that have the fewest and by not letting the burden of a shrinking city fall on the poor.

Under his direction (which overlapped the Kucinich administration), Cleveland attempted to expand the publicly owned electric company, shifted transit and park funding to a wider tax base, reorganized trash collection to maintain delivery schedules despite decreasing revenues, and "landbanked" tax-delinquent properties for future resale by the city.

Hartford, Connecticut, has also implemented social-return policies under the leadership of City Council member Nicholas Carbone. Hartford's goals were to increase the number of jobs for the un- and underemployed, to improve the city's fiscal condition, and to revitalize neighborhoods. All three goals could have been addressed by either a growth model or a social return model; the difference is that the growth approach begins with incentives for private investors while Hartford's began with the public good and benefits to the poor.

One of Hartford's first projects was to buy an abandoned department store, convert it to offices, and lease it to an airline. The city gained the rental revenue from the occupied building as well as jobs for city residents, whom the airline was required by agreement to hire. In a second project, Hartford officials challenged a state reassessment of property tax that would have shifted the tax burden from businesses to residents. This flew in the face of a "good business climate," but Hartford decided that the city would be reluctant to support private projects if the business community insisted on supporting the property tax change. The city won its challenge.

Oakland, California, is another city that has taken a social-return approach to economic development. Oakland's particular concern has been to increase economic resources for its minority community. Thus, it requires that a certain percent of city construction money go to minority-owned firms and that city contractors hire a certain percentage of minority workers. Oakland also has channeled its land write-down programs through minority- or neighborhood-controlled local development committees to ensure maximum community participation in setting goals and implementing programs.

The most recent development has been linkage policies, linking a developer's permission to undertake any large-scale project with payments (in cash or in kind) to support targeted services in the city. Where public-private partnerships use public investment for public return, linkage policies use *private* investment for public return.

One of the best-known examples of a linkage program is San Francisco's policy of requiring downtown developers to subsidize low-cost housing, transit services, and day care. Boston has also used this policy, requiring developers to hire city residents and to pay into a fund for low- and moderate-income housing. Inclusionary zoning policy, in which developers must agree to provide a certain number of moderate-priced houses in their new subdivisions, is another example.

Amid discussions of economic recovery and the successful transition to a service sector base, many urban planners and public officials are still concerned about the future. Less sanguine about the results of private-sector economic leadership, they are increasingly looking for new models of public-private cooperation. It would be a provocative challenge for the Bush administration to reshape an urban agenda based not on the politics of growth but on social responsibility. □

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Isaac Shapiro

THE DISPUTE OVER THE MINIMUM WAGE

The case for an increase in the federal minimum wage has long been persuasive. The wage floor of $3.35 an hour has not been raised for eight years; adjusted for inflation, its purchasing power has fallen to its lowest level since 1955. As the wage floor has deteriorated, the number of people who work but live in poverty has risen, and there has been growing evidence of stagnating or declining standards of living among many of the near poor and the middle class.

Two arguments—one old and one new—have been raised in opposition to the minimum-wage increase. The old argument is, that by artificially raising the cost of labor, a minimum-wage increase would price many workers out of jobs. The new argument is that in lieu of a minimum-wage increase, adjustments in the tax code could target assistance to low-wage workers without job losses. Let us see if these arguments are valid.

The Fall of the Minimum Wage

The period since January 1981 represents the longest spell without an increase in the wage floor since the federal minimum wage was established in 1938. Prices rose 37 percent between January 1981 and August 1988, and the value of the minimum wage fell to a historically low level.

In 1988, a person working full-time year-round at the minimum wage earns $2,500 less than the estimated poverty line for a family of three. In sharp contrast, during the 1960s and 1970s full-time year-round minimum wage earnings averaged slightly above the three-person poverty threshold. *Full-time year-round minimum wage earnings now equal only 74 percent of the estimated three-person poverty threshold.*

The minimum wage now equals only 36 percent of the average private, nonsupervisory wage, compared to the historical goal of 50 percent that was usually achieved in the 1960s and nearly attained in parts of the 1970s.

In 1987 some 6.3 million hourly and salaried workers earned the minimum wage or less. An additional 10.8 million such workers earned between $3.35 and $4.50 an hour.

Most workers earning the minimum wage or less do not fit the stereotype of teenagers in their first job. Half are twenty-five years or older; 20 percent are aged twenty to twenty-four; only 30 percent are teenagers. (Among workers who earned $3.36 to $4.49 an hour in 1987, more than half—53 percent—were twenty-five years or older and only 24 percent were teenagers.)

Benefits of a Minimum Wage

The minimum-wage standard assists workers who generally lack political clout, are not unionized, and are in little position to bargain for themselves. Freezing the minimum wage at $3.35 an hour for an indefinite period of time, while prices continue to rise, would suggest that this society is willing to accept the standard's gradual erosion to the point where it may cease to have meaning.

While a primary barrier to more work effort among poor individuals is the unavailability of employment, it is also important to consider the impact on work of the wages and benefits provided by available jobs.

With a low minimum wage, the benefits from working may be less, or only minimally more, than the benefits from government assistance. This is because the rewards from working are small, not because government assistance is especially generous. In fact, the support provided by government programs has diminished in recent years and, for the most part, leaves recipients well below the poverty line. Between 1977 and 1987 the maximum value of Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits for a three person family with no other income dropped by 24 percent in the typical state.

The current debate concerning work incentives and the poor has focused largely on whether significant disincentives arise from welfare assistance, while often neglecting the disincentives when working is not sufficiently rewarded. A higher minimum wage might lead some individuals—including youths, young men, and mothers on public assistance—to increase their work activity.

The minimum-wage erosion is of particular importance because of the increase in the number of

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working poor in the 1980s. In 1987 nearly 1.9 million people worked full-time year-round yet remained in poverty, 43 percent more than in 1979. An additional 6.6 million who were poor worked on less than a full-time year-round basis, up 28 percent since 1979.

Now it is true that most minimum-wage workers are not poor. An estimated seven out of ten workers paid by the hour and earning the minimum wage or less live in households with incomes more than 150 percent of the poverty line.

This does not mean, however, that the minimum wage has little connection to poverty. On the contrary, more than half—about 60 percent—of all workers who are paid by the hour and are in poverty have earnings at or near the minimum wage. For many of these workers, the serious deterioration of the minimum wage has compounded their income problems. An increase in the wage standard would help lessen their poverty.

Moreover, the needs of minimum wage workers who live in nonpoor households should not be dismissed. Some of these families are struggling to get by even though they are two-earner families, because one or both workers may be employed at or near the minimum wage.

Partial Job Losses

The chief argument raised against a minimum wage increase is that it would decrease the demand for labor. Young workers in particular, it is argued, would have fewer opportunities because they are the least productive employees.

Although minimum-wage increases probably would cause some employment loss, it is likely to be far smaller than the figures cited by opponents. Virtually all of their estimates are based on outdated studies of pre-1980 labor markets.

The best of these pre-1980 studies was conducted by economists of the Minimum Wage Study Commission, established by Congress in 1977. They reviewed all previous studies and conducted an updated study of their own. They found that a 10 percent increase in the minimum wage is associated with a 1 percent decrease in teenage employment and a decrease of one-quarter of 1 percent in the employment of young adults (twenty to twenty-four years old). The economists did not find compelling evidence of any job loss for adults twenty-five and over. Nonetheless, many of the jobs loss projections now cited use estimates based on the high range of the pre-1980 studies reviewed by the commission, without noting that this range is substantially higher than that of the commission staff's estimates.

Moreover, even the job loss estimates of the commission staff are now out of date. They are based on labor market data through 1979 and do not reflect the important differences between today's low-wage labor market and that of the 1960s and 1970s.

Fortunately, a new study—conducted by Alison Wellington of the University of Michigan under the supervision of one of the commission's senior economists—has replicated the work of the commission staff, but with labor market data through 1986. *It finds that a minimum-wage increase of 10 percent is associated with a 0.56 percent decrease in employment opportunities and that there is no effect on the employment of young adults.*

Several factors support estimates that a minimum-wage boost would cause only modest job losses. Higher wages may enhance job stability and commitment among workers, not minor factors in low-wage labor markets often characterized by quick job turnover. Employers, in turn, may respond to a minimum wage hike by reorganizing production processes to make better use of existing employees. As a result of increased productivity, the actual cost of labor may not rise as much as the increase in the minimum wage.

Moreover, now is a particularly auspicious time to raise the minimum wage. First, since the current minimum wage is substantially lower than in the past, relatively fewer workers now work at or near the minimum wage. An increase in the minimum wage is thus likely to have a smaller effect on the economy than in the past.

Second, a shortage in the supply of teenage workers may be emerging. The number of sixteen to nineteen year olds rose in all but one of the twenty-five years preceding 1978, but has fallen sharply in the 1980s. The disemployment estimates cited above, as well as those noted by some opponents of a minimum wage increase, are based primarily on years when the youth population was rising and thus may be overstated.

Finally, eleven states and the District of Columbia have boosted their minimum-wage levels above the federal level, including California, which has raised its minimum wage to $4.25 an hour. In these areas, the economic effects of restoring the federal minimum wage have been partially preempted, thus dampening any possible negative employment effects due to changes in federal law.

The Earned-Income Tax Credit

The tradeoffs involved in raising the minimum wage have led some to advance substitute proposals for

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assisting poor workers. A proposal that has gathered some support in Congress would expand the earned income tax credit (EITC) as a substitute for a minimum wage increase.

Indeed, the EITC is a particularly effective government program to aid low-wage working families. The EITC helps offset the federal social security taxes paid by low-income workers with children. It now provides a credit of 14 percent on the first $6,250 of annual earnings. The maximum credit of $875 is phased out for annual earnings above $9,840.

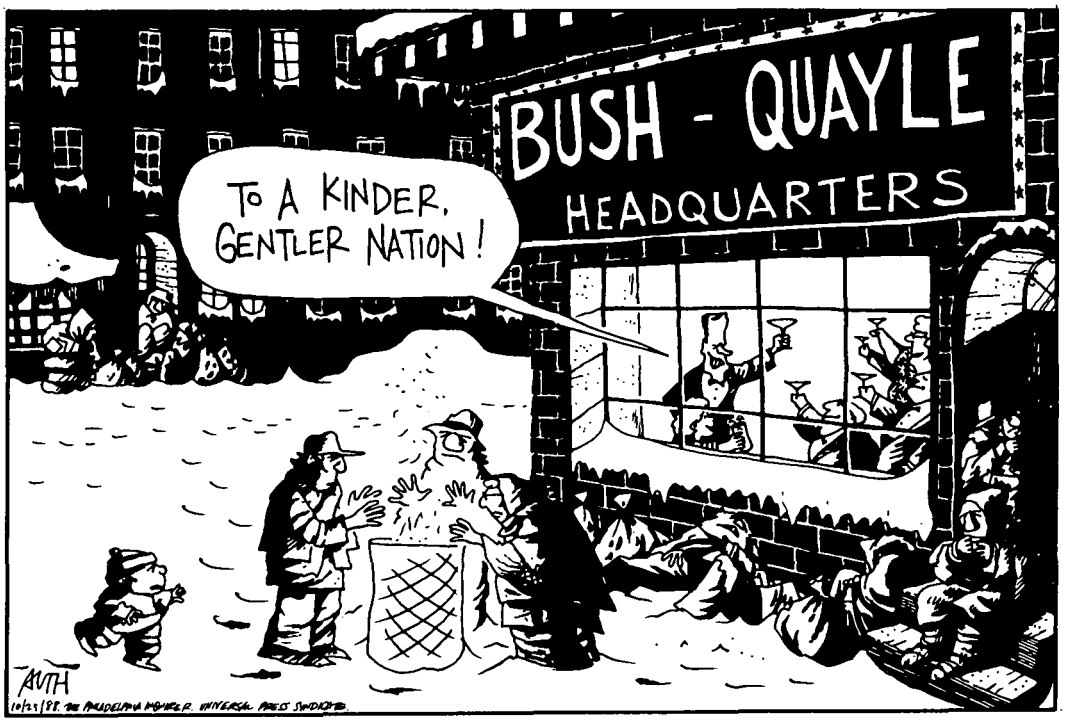
Currently the credit varies only by the levels of earned income in a family, and not by family size. Since income needs increase as families become larger, adjusting the EITC by family size would diminish the income problems of large working-poor families.

Still, further expansion of the EITC is not a substitute but is a complement to a minimum wage increase. One congressional proposal would increase the credit by a maximum of $125 for a family with one child, $625 for a family with two children, and by even larger amounts for families with three or more children. The proposal is near the upper bound of proposed EITC expansions in its scope and cost—$2 billion annually—and is generally an excellent approach. But without a minimum-wage increase, it would leave families well short of the poverty line. At current minimum-wage levels, a two-parent family of four with a full-time minimum-wage worker would still fall $3,700 below the poverty line.

An EITC increase that would have as much impact on a three-person family as a return of the minimum wage to the three-person poverty line would need to be extremely large—much larger than any currently proposed. It would require more than tripling the EITC phase-in rate (from 14 percent to at least 45 percent) and would likely add billions in new costs. Such a proposal would be even more costly to the federal government if it also extended help, as a minimum wage increase would, to childless couples and workers living alone.

Last, even though the EITC extends some relief to workers above the poverty line, the relief currently extended would be considerably less than the amount of additional income that potentially would be earned by near-poor and moderate income workers if the minimum wage were returned to its historical level.

Given the likely consequences of the minimum wage on workers, an increase is overdue. This action to help low-wage workers should be among the priorities of the new Congress and administration. □



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J. Michael Luhan

HOW THE CHINESE RULE TIBET

On a recent morning in Lhasa a lone Western tourist was strolling through the dim, centuries-old corridors of Jokang Temple, the holiest shrine of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism. An accompanying guide recited the histories of the magnificent thangka paintings adorning the walls and massive Buddhas and buddhisattvas seated in gilded repose within candlelit chapels. An odor of rancid yak butter permeated the musty air. Maroon-robed monks murmured prayers while tending to butterlamps and Tibetan pilgrims performed trance-like prostrations to the drone of chanted mantras and the scraping of their makeshift cardboard handguards on the paving stones. For the tourist, it was a spellbinding scene of ancient tradition and religious devotion.

But the guide suddenly interrupted his lecture, looked cautiously about and, seeing they were alone, proceeded to break the spell with an altogether different, unauthorized version of the Jokang's history. Several months earlier, on March 5, the guide said, hundreds of Chinese police had rampaged through these same sacred corridors, clubbing and shooting to death some thirty monks in retaliation for an unarmed, pro-independence demonstration. Hundreds more monks and lay Tibetans, including several friends of the guide, were arrested and taken away to local prisons in Lhasa, where they endured days of savage beatings with sticks, truncheons, and fists and where many languished still. Outside around the temple on the cobbled path known as the Barkhor, hidden cameras were primed to record any future public disturbances and roaming plainclothed police had orders to shoot would-be instigators on sight. When another figure approached, the guide resumed lecturing and showed a fist to the tourist with the small finger pointed downward, the Tibetan gesture for a Chinese informant.

The world reads almost daily about the good things happening in China—its market economics, productive growth rate, happy peasants-cum-millionaires—and thus seems to have accommodated the idea of Hong Kong and even Taiwan being reunited with the motherland. Meanwhile, events like the Jokang massacre—which was confirmed by numerous local sources, including a policeman who was inside the temple during the mayhem—are swallowed up in the same silence that has shrouded Tibet's fate since its occupation by the People's Liberation Army in 1950.

Nearly four decades after signing with China the fateful "17-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet," which guaranteed its autonomy, Tibet is close to extinction as a meaningful demographic and cultural entity. As opposed to being saved from imperialism by the occupation (at a time when there was a total of six Europeans in Tibet), the country today looks more like the victim of a liquidation sale after an unfriendly corporate takeover. Nearly half its territory was long ago carved up and auctioned off to contiguous Chinese provinces. Lhasa, whose spiritual and architectural character was for centuries a source of wonderment, is now a drab Chinese factory town with a few impressive Tibetan monuments; other major towns like Shigatse, Chamdo, and Gyantse are suffering similar transformations under a flood of resettled Chinese. As recently as March 1988 Beijing admitted to a total resident population of 73,000 Han Chinese in the entire Tibet Autonomous Region, who were there only "to help develop the local economy and stimulate scientific, educational and cultural advancement." On a busy day a tourist can see that many Chinese just in the streets of Lhasa—mending shoes, repairing bicycles, laying bricks, serving meals and performing other essential tasks that, after forty years of "advancement," Tibetans strangely are said to be still incapable of doing themselves. And despite overwhelming evidence of the deaths of up to one million Tibetans over the past thirty years from famine, internment in labor camps, "struggle sessions," and counterinsurgency operations, China steadfastly continues to deny all such charges with census statistics and voodoo mathematics.

Only on two occasions has the case of Tibet been

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brought under serious international scrutiny: in 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled the country and again in 1987 when anti-Chinese riots rocked Lhasa during a rarely permitted visit by Western news personnel. Last year's U.S. congressional hearings on Tibet produced enough convincing testimony to spur resolutions by both houses condemning China's policies. A February 1988 report by Asia Watch likewise found that "the prevalence of serious human rights abuses in Tibet is beyond dispute," including the mass imprisonment and routine torture of political dissidents, discrimination in employment, education and housing, forced sterilizations, and a stage-managed renaissance of Buddhism in which "the role of tourism . . . is undeniable." The report hastened to add that, although China continues to dismiss such abuses as aberrations of the Cultural Revolution, most aspects of Tibet's cultural and religious defilement have been standing policy before, during, and after that chaotic reign.

The response of the Reagan administration has been to shoot the messengers of this bad news, restate U.S. recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, and remain passive while Chinese police continue a sweeping crackdown on unarmed Tibetan dissidents. A herd of some forty congressmen passed through Lhasa for a few days in April 1988 for a quick look. But Tibet has been resolutely consigned by the administration to its familiar cemetery of silence.

The stakes of confronting Beijing on its behavior in Tibet are not to be underestimated. Billions of dollars in potential trade revenues can make a lot of civilized countries forgetful of human rights. Tibet, however, entails not just a provocative argument about Communist China's moral fiber but its legal attitude toward the question of autonomy and thus casts a shadow over discussions on Hong Kong and Taiwan. The 17-Point Agreement of 1951 pledged China to leave Tibet's existing political system intact, preserve freedom of religion, develop the Tibetan language and culture, allow the local government to carry out reforms of its own accord, and abstain from plunder. China continues to violate these pledges.

The Dalai Lama has spent the 1980s trying to persuade Beijing to honor the agreement as a precondition for his return, but to no avail. When unnamed officials of Beijing's State Nationalities Affairs Commission were questioned by *Beijing Review* earlier this year about the parallels between autonomy in Tibet and Taiwan, the answers were equally evasive. "Tibet is an autonomous region under the unified leadership of the central government," the officials replied. "The 'nine-points' for Taiwan cannot be applied to Tibet." Why can't they be? There certainly is a familiar ring to them. As first made public in September 1981 by Ye Jianying, the late chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China proposes to convert Taiwan into a "special administrative area enjoying a high degree of autonomy" and "to retain the existing school and economic systems [and] way of life."

A useful way to examine the Chinese view of "autonomy" is to visit Tibet as a tourist, as I did for two weeks in July. Beijing has placed a high premium on tourism there as a source of foreign exchange and a self-financing alternative to massive subsidization from the central government, which amounted to 98 percent of Tibet's budget in 1986. (This shouldn't, however, leave the misleading impression that Tibet is a fiscal liability; China annually extracts enormous amounts of mineral wealth from Tibet that simply aren't counted as local revenue.) As much as $240 million has reportedly been invested in tourism facilities and infrastructure. In 1985, almost the entire Tibetan residential area around the Jokang was torn down and redone, the Barkhor Plaza completely renovated, and a full-service luxury accommodation, the Lhasa Hotel, built in six months. The annual number of tourists has increased rapidly, from 15,000 in 1985 to 40,000 in 1987.

Only a tiny percentage of these expenditures has gone into Tibetan pockets. The top-dollar tourists stay at the Lhasa Hotel and its annex, the Tibet Guest House, which are operated by Holiday Inn on contract with the Tibet Tourism Corporation. Positions in management, public relations, staff supervision, and reception are filled by Westerners, Hong Kong Chinese brought in by Holiday Inn, and cadres from Beijing and Shanghai who are in training to eventually assume control; Tibetans compete with locally hired Chinese to serve meals and clean rooms. There are five hostels run by Tibetans, whose combined room capacity is only 70 percent of the Hotel Lhasa's alone and whose nightly rates, fixed by the government, are a tenth of the Lhasa's.

The overwhelming number of restaurants in town are run by Szechuanese, and it is to these that tourists gravitate. Tibetans mainly run cheap chang joints for fellow Tibetans. This is no accident, as Chinese have all the requisite political contacts for licenses and loans. The most frequented area for tourists is the Barkhor, where Tibetans sell turquoise jewelry, cheap brassware, and $10 Khampa knives

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from street stands. But the permanent indoor shops with expensive durable goods are the province of Nepalese merchants, whose traditional privileges in Tibet have been converted under the Chinese into a virtual monopoly of South Asian trade by the severe travel restrictions on Tibetans.

There is one very obvious exception to the Nepalese cartel. That is the chain of stores operated on the Barkhor by the Panchen Lama, the second highest official in Tibetan Buddhism, who serves as an apt model for what it takes to get ahead under the current system. In 1964, he disappeared from view after refusing Chinese demands to publicly denounce the Dalai Lama and reappeared only after spending fourteen years incommunicado in Qin Cheng Prison No. 1, just outside Beijing. The solitude evidently gave him time to rethink his position: "For a period of time I discarded the banner of patriotism and committed a crime," he told the New China News Agency after his release in 1978. "Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, I have corrected my errors." As a result of his new thinking, his Tibet-China Corporation operates enterprises that include the Barkhor stores, hostels, and restaurants, and uses the proceeds to support Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse, his ancestral seat. Meanwhile, he remains a pathetic hostage of the Chinese in Beijing and is hauled into public view whenever useful statements need to be made, such as a denunciation of the 1987 riots. He has also deconsecrated himself as a lama by breaking his vows of celibacy and taking a Chinese wife, and now wears only the layman's chuba in public.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of tourism is the almost total absence of Tibetan tour guides. My own group was led by a very attractive young woman from Shanghai who had been in Tibet less than a week, spoke no Tibetan, and knew nothing whatever about Tibetan culture or Buddhism. I approached Lhasa Travel Service, a CITS subsidiary, and waited for three days for a Tibetan guide without success.

One is tempted to conclude that, like the scarcity of good Tibetan hotels, restaurants and retail stores, the absence of Tibetan guides is no accident. Tourism is a risky venture for the Chinese in Tibet because improper management can lead to information leakage. When I finally did manage to arrange for a Tibetan guide, I was given some very "unpatriotic" impressions. About the Jokang's recent history as a killing ground, for example, and the continuing nocturnal abduction, torture, and imprisonment of suspected activists. ("One night many Chinese come this monastery, do like this to the abbot," a small boy-monk said excitedly, placing his hands together as though handcuffed and mimicking the whipping action of rifle butts.) About the exorbitant fees tourists pay for photos inside temples and monasteries, which officially go toward restoration but in reality are diligently collected each evening by the government's "democratic management committees"—along with the money offerings from Tibetan pilgrims—and deposited into government-controlled bank accounts. About the Tibet Art Gallery, which plays the public role of benefactor for Tibetan artists but whose proceeds go to a high-ranking CITS apparatchik (an observation later confirmed by an indignant Chinese tour guide). About the voracious smuggling of the Tibetan Khampas, who buy for a song the sacred religious icons of desperate Tibetan families and peddle them on the international market. "In Tibet it is considered not good to sell such things," said one smuggler sheepishly. "But people need money."

What the People's Republic of China calls autonomy is a euphemism for nineteenth-century colonialism wedded to trickle-down economics. Until genuine autonomy for Tibet is granted—and the Dalai Lama permitted to return as a guarantor—all bets on Hong Kong and Taiwan should remain off. □

Bernt Carlsson
1937–1988

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Glasnost Watch

Josephine Woll

FRUITS OF GLASNOST

A Sampling from the Soviet Press

For the past two years Soviet newspapers and magazines have used the unexpected freedom made available by glasnost. *Once, editors had to clear all questionable material with the censors; now, if they ask, they are told to decide for themselves. The censor who regularly used to sit in on editorial meetings is not to be seen; the "index" of taboo subjects has shrunk drastically. Even old time-servers like Aleksandr Chakovsky, member of the party's Central Committee and the Writers' Union board and until recently editor of* Literaturnaya gazeta, *take advantage of expanded opportunities to print articles both startling and fascinating, while editors appointed by Gorbachev, like Vitaly Korotich (*Ogonek*) and Yegor Yakovlev (*Moscow News*), are often ahead of him in what they perceive the press can and should do.*

Of all the corners of Soviet life into which the press has probed, the rediscovered history of the Soviet state has been a source of constant interest—and frequent amazement—to readers domestic and foreign. Yuri Afanasyev, rector of the State Archivists Institute in Moscow, comments bitterly that no country has falsified its history as consistently, and as grossly, as the Soviet Union. And Dmitri Likhachev, an eminent medieval scholar who has been instrumental in the popular movement to restore Russian cultural monuments, refers to memory as "the conscience of a nation." Memory—individual, societal, institutional—has been reactivated in the Soviet Union, and the layers of falsification are, sometimes painfully and unevenly, being stripped away.

The years—and crimes—of Stalinism have received particular attention. After all, in a state seventy years old, Stalin's reign accounts for one-third of its past. But the eras bracketing Stalin's are also under scrutiny: Khrushchev's fall from power and Brezhnev's policies in Eastern Europe, the transition from Lenin to Stalin, even the Romanov dynasty. There are limits. Certain subjects—Lenin's justification of terrorism, the antireligious campaigns of the early Bolshevik period—are still out of bounds, although given the pace at which sacred cows are being gored, a wise reader must add the caveat: for the moment. Too many sibyls have choked on their own "impossibles" and "nevers" to exclude any topic out of hand. Other topics, such as the Czech invasion and the Hitler-Stalin pact, are discussed, but often with substantial distortions, a few examples of which are included here. On the whole, however, historical inquiry, for so long steeped in lies blocked entirely, is rampant.

Western journalists have recognized the "story" of the Soviet rediscovery of its past. And they have covered it quite well. But dipping into the Soviet press itself has a power of its own. What appears here can only suggest the range of subjects, degrees of passion, and points of view represented on these issues. Stale, formulaic bombast vies with plain speech, but the plurality of opinions is a remarkable feature of the debate that continues

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in nearly every issue of nearly every newspaper and magazine.

I have tried, when excerpting from longer texts, to avoid betraying the sense (or flavor) of the whole piece. The original Soviet source follows each excerpt; translations, modified where necessary, are drawn from the Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) *and the* Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Moscow News *appears in an English-language edition as well as in Russian and other languages. My comments are in italic.*

—J.W.

The first problem to be widely recognized was the corruption of history as a discipline. How can the "blank spots" of Soviet history be filled when books are unavailable, teachers uninformed, and archives inaccessible?

Ban Lifted

By November of 1988, six thousand book titles that have remained until now in libraries' special collections will be made available to the reading public. This was announced by V. Solodin of the collegium of the Chief Administration for the Protection of State Secrets in Print at a briefing at the Novosti News Agency.

An exhibit of publications that just yesterday were "off limits" is displayed at the entrance to the news agency's Blue Hall. They were collected—in attics, basements, and galleries—by Moscow bibliographile V. Maryash. The first catalog of V. Lenin's works, compiled by L. Kamenev, *The ABCs of Communism* by N. Bukharin and Ye. Preobrazhensky, the works of P. Kropotkin, L. Trotsky, B. Savinkov and P. Milyukov, . . . the text of the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II—all this and much more is the living history of the Revolution and invaluable testimony to the fierce political struggle of that era.

As a result of the bans, the "secret" literature was not sold in secondhand bookstores and was not reprinted for many decades. Libraries destroyed books, and private book owners, fearing the consequences, also disposed of them.

Now, despite their wide circulation, publications from the first years of Soviet power, as well as the subsequent period, exist only in individual copies. An entire period of the country's literary culture is on the verge of extinction! Saving it is the top priority of the Interdepartmental Commission for the Transfer of Literature from Special Collections to General Use.

In one year the commission has returned roughly four thousand publications to the reader. The fate of another two thousand is to be considered by November of this year. The principle of selection is simple and clear: "Open up" all books except those containing appeals that incite war or conflicts between nationalities, or pornography. Some 180 books and brochures written by N. Bukharin, nearly seventy works by A. Rykov, works by A. Rozengolts, M. Chernov, etc., have been "rehabilitated." Let library visitors themselves judge the merits and authenticity of the memoirs of A. Kerensky, Ataman P. Krasnov or [*White Guard*] General A. Denikin, for example. . . .

—S. Taranov, *Izvestia,* April 3, 1988, p. 6; *CDSP* XL, 14/1988, pp. 19–20.

Access Restricted

Historians complain that officials in charge of archives are more concerned with protecting the documents than with making them available. The archive guardians show open hostility toward historians, who, in the formers' view, try to poke their noses into places where they don't belong. At a recent national conference M. Stegantsev, director of the Central Archives of the Soviet Army, angrily dressed down the prominent historian V. Polikarpov for requesting documents that, under a 1981 Defense Ministry directive, it was forbidden to show without special authorization.

It turns out that the "restricted access" to archival documents that was imposed during the years of stagnation [*a phrase commonly*

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used to designate Brezhnev's time in power] is still in effect. For example, 730,000 personal files held in the Central Archives of the USSR National Economy are under "restricted access." This means that a historian who wants to look at such a file has to get permission from the appropriate agency—it might be the USSR State Construction Committee or the USSR Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy. Even if a researcher gets permission to examine documents under "restricted access," he cannot cite them. This is why, for example, so few individual names are mentioned in histories of the Civil War, even though thousands of soldiers and officers were decorated for service in the Red Army at that time.

At present, archive employees' performance is evaluated on the basis of the number of documents in their charge. Ya. I. Aleksandrov, a senior archivist, explains that staff members receive a 15 percent salary increment for being in charge of "secret" documents. Ironically, although the archivists' overriding concern is with protecting documents, they are protected poorly. The buildings of the depositories that make up the archives complex on Pirogovskaya Street in Moscow have no air conditioning and no humidity regulators. There is mold on the walls. Fragile document paper is crumbling and texts are fading. Millions of sheets are already illegible, even under a magnifying glass.

Eighteen months ago V. Tsaplin, director of the Central Archives of the USSR National Economy, sent department heads a letter recommending that henceforth archivists' performance be evaluated according to the extent that archival documents are actually used in historical scholarship. . . .

When I asked Doctor of History F. Vaganov, director of the USSR Council of Ministers' Chief Archives Administration, what he thought of Tsaplin's proposals, he called them "contrived." It was clear in my interview with Vaganov that he had no interest whatsoever in changing the way archives are operated. . . . When I asked Vaganov whether the wartime orders of the Supreme Commander in Chief, about which historians had raised questions, would be published, he retorted: "In what connection is there such an interest? A great deal has been done, as it is, to demean the significance of our great victory over fascism."

—V. Molchanov, *Pravda,* June 1, 1988, p. 4; *CDSP* XL, 22/1988.

The Test Is Canceled, History Remains!

There will be no final exam in history and social studies in the nation's schools. Naturally, the very fact of its cancellation attests to the victory of common sense and ordinary conscientiousness. . . . The decision to cancel the test was the only possible sober and honest one. . . . In connection with this decision, no one—neither teachers, parents, nor students—can experience anything but a sense of relief and gratitude toward those who had the courage to say no to this test. But these feelings are mixed—there is also a very great sense of shame.

Let's think about it and try to understand. The teachers who started teaching after the Twentieth Party Congress [1956] are already past forty. That means that they themselves have been teaching children for two decades. How on earth did it come to pass that all these years, lesson after lesson, even the best and most inquisitive teachers, even those not too lazy to read, to learn, and to try to find things out . . . presented the history of our homeland in a monstrously distorted and unrecognizable form? And how hard it is for these guilty, but blameless, teachers to open the latest newspapers and carefully read the searing lines and realize that they cannot teach children either

Vasily Alexandrov/MOSCOW NEWS

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today, tomorrow, or any other day unless they reeducate themselves. . . . It is evident that no one is going to write any serious textbooks . . . in the two summer months. This means that stopgap measures are needed. . . . We need to issue a call to the historians, social scientists, and economists who, through their fierce social and political journalism, have already proven their independence from the ingrained formulas, clichés, and concepts. And we should call upon them to perform an act of civic courage by preparing a series of articles for use in the schools, articles that could be published in the form of a brochure or carried in the periodical press. . . .

—I. Ovchinnikova, *Izvestia*, June 10, 1988, p. 1; *CDSP* XL, No. 23/1988, p. 22.

Among other initiatives, a group of young historians and scholars won the support of the Komsomol Central Committee to set up a professional association of historians. In mid-July a meeting was held to discuss creating this organization. Participants issued a call to their colleagues, blending—in the tradition of the Russian intelligentsia—moral and intellectual categories:

To the Country's Young Historians

We appeal to you today to back the idea of creating in our country a professional association of young historians, pedagogues, creative and museum workers, and archivists—in short, of all who had adopted creative labor in the sphere of history as the goal and meaning of their lives.

. . . The social ills which have struck society can be cured only by relying on the historical experience accumulated by the USSR peoples and all mankind. Only by mastering the wealth of humanitarian culture and the ethical and aesthetic values created by many generations of people will it become possible to build on our planet, together with other countries, a new humanitarian community. . . . A special responsibility is borne today by the humanitarian intelligentsia and historians, and the knowledge of history is being transformed from a purely academic pursuit into a universal social need. . . .

—"Time for Quest and Hope," *Komsomolskaya pravda*, July 30, 1988; FBIS.

Old ways die hard, however. A letter-writer, V. Pozdnyakov, complained to Izvestia *about the mulish, all-too-prevalent mentality that cannot abandon familiar patterns:*

No Person, No Problem

. . . I obtained the fourth edition of the *Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1987). I already had the first edition (1981). I wanted to compare them. In the first edition, for example, I read the entries: "Kun; kuna; Kunayev, A.M.; Kunayev, D. A.; kunar." In the fourth I read: "Kun; kuna; Kunayev, A. M.; kunachestvo." What happened to the "Sov. Party and gov. leader, three-time Hero of Socialist Labor, etc., etc."? We have all read of his doings in Kazakhstan and of their deplorable consequences. [*Kunayev, D.A., convicted on criminal charges, was expelled from the party and removed from all official posts.*] They were dealt with properly in the newspapers. But what about history and the young people who don't remember that? Rashidov and Shchelokov [*other high-level political figures convicted on criminal charges*] have "disappeared" in exactly the same way—they aren't there! With Trotsky, there's an absolute paradox: "Trotskyism" is there, but Trotsky isn't. Apparently, the editorial board of the SED thinks that the importance of the question will disappear if someone's name is not printed. It's just like Stalin's mentality: "If there's a person, there's a problem. If there's no person, there's no problem.". . .

This old tendency—to make the presence of a given name in encyclopedias dependent on the leadership and its attitude to the name—should be made a thing of the past. It is time to give up hiding the truth from the people. I have read that the next edition of the dictionary is ready to go to press. It is good that the new edition will contain the names of everyone who has been rehabilitated. But what about the guilty ones? For example, Yagoda, Yezhov,

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Beria, Bagirov and company. The people should know the names not only of their heroes but of those who dealt harshly with them.

—V. Pozdnyakov, *Izvestia,* August 3, 1988, p. 6; *CDSP* XL, 31/1988, p. 24.

And what about old what's-his-name?

Just recently we, the employees of city public libraries, were summoned to a special seminar and, after being told that these were the instructions of higher authorities, were ordered to remove from our collections the works of Brezhnev, Grishin, Suslov, Chernenko, and a number of other authors, as well as all the political and economic literature published prior to March 1985, as material that is outdated and no longer relevant. It was recommended that we remove the documents of the Twenty-second through the Twenty-sixth Party Congresses from our shelves and tell any patrons who ask for them that they are currently in use.

Doesn't this mean that, while granting access to the archival documents of fifty years ago, we are creating new "blank spots" in our most recent history?

—I. Zavgorodnyaya, Crimea province, letter to *Izvestia,* August 17, 1988, p. 6; *CDSP* XL, 33/1988, p. 18.

High on the list of priorities was rehabilitating victims of the Great Terror, whose names and histories had remained clouded even after the partial rehabilitations of the Khrushchev years. It began slowly, with the publication of an interview with Bukharin's widow and the text of her letter requesting reconsideration of her husband's case. It became a flood.

The Moment of Truth Is Inescapable

By Decision of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Title of Academician Has Been Restored to N. I. Bukharin.

A report from Leningrad was published in *Izvestia* on January 13, 1929: The general meeting of the USSR Academy of Sciences had elected new Academicians. . . . Among them was N.I. Bukharin. . . . The first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia describes Bukharin not only as one of the leaders of the All-Russian Communist party (Bolsheviks) and the Communist International and one of the leading participants in the October Revolution. . . . He is also described as an outstanding economist, sociologist, and theoretician of communism.

And what a sharp contrast—like night and day—one sees in the newspaper report about that same person published in 1937: "The reorganization of the USSR Academy of Sciences was hindered by the subversive efforts of enemies of the people. . . . An anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary group, headed by the enemy of the people Bukharin, seized leadership posts in the Academy and, with the full connivance of the former Presidium of the Academy, influenced the . . . work performed by this scientific body. One of the major pockets of counterrevolutionary activity in the Academy was in the Institute of the History of Science and Technology, which was headed by Bukharin." On May 21, 1937, a general meeting of the USSR Academy of Sciences stripped N. I. Bukharin of his title of Academician and expelled him from the Presidium. . . .

This dark page cannot be erased from the glorious history of our Academy the way Bukharin's name was erased from the list of Academicians and members of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences and, less than a year later, from the list of the living. But there is one thing about history: The moment of truth is inescapable (it is a bitter fact that one sometimes has to wait decades for it).

On May 10, 1988, the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences adopted a resolution: "In connection with the full rehabilitation of N. I. Bukharin by the USSR Supreme Court . . . and with the clearing of his name, which was criminally besmirched during the years of the J. V. Stalin personality cult, the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences resolves:

1. To restore posthumously to Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin the title of full member (Academician) of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

2. To submit to the general meeting of the . . . Academy . . . a proposal calling for the abrogation of the May 21, 1937 resolution. . . .

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—Kim Smirnov, *Izvestia*, May 11, 1988, p. 3; *CDSP* XL, 19/1988.

Even Trotsky, though still awaiting serious study, is no longer demonized, as is clear from the following response given by Otto Latsis, deputy editor-in-chief of Kommunist *(the theoretical organ of the CPSU), to reporters from* Komsomolskaya pravda *during the Nineteenth Party Conference:*

Q: Will L. Trotsky be rehabilitated in the future?

A: There is such a thing as civil rehabilitation, and L. Trotsky deserves such rehabilitation. He was not a spy, nor a killer, nor did he commit any criminal offenses. But there is also political rehabilitation—reinstatement in the Party. In my opinion, this will not occur. Here's why. L. Trotsky was removed from the Party not in 1937 but ten years earlier. The truth is, we must stop keeping silent on his role in the organization of our army, his participation in the construction of the Party. But we must also not forget that he repeatedly came out against Lenin and against the general Party line. An objective definition of his role in our history will not lead to L. Trotsky's political rehabilitation.

But independent of this, his works should be accessible. They are also a part of our history. . . .

—June 28, 1988, p. 1. *CDSP* XL 26/1988, p. 31.

Within days of the USSR Supreme Court's decision to rescind the sentences of the persons falsely convicted in the major show trials of 1936 and 1937, articles appeared everywhere. Yevgeny Ambartsumov concentrated on the psychology of the victims:

A Venomous Fog Lifts

. . . Stalin's terror using judicial falsification began, strictly speaking, in the late 1920s with the so-called Shakhty Affair and the "Industrial Party" trial, in which the old engineering intelligentsia was assigned the role of scapegoat for the natural interruptions in forced industrialization. The next social victim, in the early 1930s, was the Russian peasantry, against which outright genocide was committed during forcible collectivization (the approximate number of victims was between five million and ten million). Stalin's third blow fell on the Party, on its old guard. Oppositionists had been subjected to repression—exile and imprisonment—even earlier. But as a result of the trials of the 1930s, some of the most prominent leaders of the Party and the government, former members of the Politburo and the Central Committee and Lenin's comrades-in-arms from the first revolutionary battles, whom he had mentioned in his Testament, were condemned to death.

Stalin ordered Yagoda to pin the assassination of Kirov on former members of the opposition—the Trotskyist and the so-called "new" (Zinoviev-Kamenev) opposition. In April 1935, about three hundred oppositionists from whom investigators had beaten confessions were brought together in the cellars of the Lubyanka Prison, and by May about fifteen relatively "plausible" confessions had been obtained. It comes as no surprise that Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Zakovsky, a former criminal who had been convicted of murder before the Revolution, boasted that he would have been able to make Marx himself confess to working for Bismarck.

On July 29, 1936, a month before the first trial, a secret instruction on the admissibility of employing any methods of investigation against "spies, counterrevolutionaries, White Guards, Trotskyists and Zinovievites" was adopted at Stalin's initiative. "Don't come to me without a confession from Kamenev," said Stalin threateningly to the investigator, Mironov, who would soon, of course, meet the same fate as the people he was investigating, as would Zakovsky. . . .

But why did the accused persons confess? This question grates, not without reason, among those who have retained Stalinist illusions. After all, many of the convicted persons had gone through tsarist and White Guard torture chambers without giving in. The answer, I think, is provided by George Orwell, whose novel *1984* will soon be published in our country: For every person, even the most steadfast, a torture can be found that will break

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him. Even so, as if contradicting Orwell, some held out for a long time. . . . Even worse than the physical torture, probably, was the moral torture—the threat of reprisals against family members. . . . [1984 *has already been printed in a Latvian journal and is due to appear in* Novyi mir *soon.*]

There was also—and this must be remembered—a certain social and psychological basis for the "cooperation" of the accused with the prosecution. It was the erosion of moral foundations, of those immutable values, common to all mankind, to which we are turning today. Could Zinoviev have waged a principled struggle against Stalin when Zinoviev himself, together with Kamenev, had violated Lenin's dying will by preventing Stalin's removal from the post of General Secretary? And when Zinoviev and Trotsky had considered their widely known ruthlessness during the Revolution to be valor? They themselves constructed the bonebreaking time bomb that pulverized them. And what can one say about Pyatakov and Radek, who publicly joined—nor were they the only ones—in the awful general chorus of demands for the death penalty during the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev? A close friend of Pyatakov's, the Menshevik émigré Valentinov (Volsky), met him in Paris in 1928, soon after the capitulation of the oppositionists, and reproached him for his lack of moral courage. In reply, Pyatakov referred to what he termed the true Bolshevik's lack of any restraints—moral, political, even physical. "The true Bolshevik," he added, "dissolves his personality in Party collectivity" and therefore can renounce "any personal opinion or conviction." That is how murderous and suicidal the moral nihilism was that was passed off as revolutionary spirit was! . . .

—*Moscow News*, June 19, 1988, p. 10.

Yury Feofanov focused on the transformation of Soviet society:

Return to the Truth

. . . After 1934 an epidemic of a disease that can be called the "mob syndrome" appeared in society. A mob, as is known, lives according to the laws of a perverted dialectic: It is uncontrollable, but at the same time it is easily directed by a single exclamation—"Sic him!"; having no convictions, it nonetheless is in the grip of a single impulse; it can unite a hundred people in an instant and can break up just as quickly, but it is also capable of unlimited growth and a long life span.

. . . On August 15, 1936, a succinct report headed "In the USSR Prosecutor's Office" appeared on page two of *Izvestia*, in the upper right-hand corner. It simply reported that Kamenev, Zinoviev, and others were being brought to trial. But at once "the wrath of the working people" appeared in all the newspapers: "No mercy for the enemies," "Destroy the vermin," and so on. Rallies of workers, collective farmers, scientists, and cultural figures adopted resolutions, as did Party *aktivs* and general meetings; certain of the country's most prominent citizens signed individual and collective letters expressing their devotion to Comrade Stalin. There was still no evidence against the accused, no verdict; yet the "masses" were already aflame with malign enthusiasm. Society had turned into a mob. How sincere were all these resolutions calling for the defendants to be destroyed? I don't know, I can't confirm anything. But isn't a mob sincere in its savage impulses?

This whole campaign took place at a time when the country was discussing a draft Constitution, which was already being called the "Stalin Constitution." Incessant radio broadcasts affirmed that there was no other country in the world "where man breathes so freely." [*The phrase comes from a popular song dinned into Soviet ears; it was recently denounced in a newspaper letter as "revolting humbug."*] An article in *Izvestia* . . . said that judges and prosecutors must "investigate first, then arrest," that "sooner or later, the question should be raised of admitting the defense to the preliminary investigation." There was even mention of a "habeas corpus act"—the document that had substantiated the presumption of innocence for many centuries. People read the article. And there and then they demanded that "the vermin be destroyed," although the trial had not yet begun. . . .

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—*Izvestia*, June 14, 1988, p. 3; *CDSP* XL, 24/1988; pp. 8–9

In Moscow News *(28/1988) Mikhail Gurfinkel published a piece entitled "Who Was Repressed?" His article deals with members of the Party Central Committee purged in the second half of the 1930s, and begins:*

. . . Can we now name people instead of just quoting the figure [*of those repressed*]? The full list of the members of the Party's leading organ who were repressed has never been published. Still, a list could be compiled from the available literature. . . .

Let's compare the Central Committees elected at the Seventeenth (1934) and Nineteenth (1939) Party congresses: in 1939, only twenty-four of those who had been elected to the Central Committee in 1934 were again elected. They included J. Stalin, V. Molotov, K. Voroshilov, L. Kaganovich, M. Kalinin, and others. It's not difficult to work out that 115 people were replaced. But which of them were repressed? To answer this question we have to study all 115 biographies. . . .

Gurfinkel eliminates the handful who "died their own deaths" (or, in Bertram Wolfe's words, died that most unnatural of deaths for a Bolshevik, a natural death) between 1934 and 1939. He then enumerates, one by one, the names, posts, and dates of death (or approximate dates) of each of the 104 people repressed between 1936 and 1941, such as G. Pyatakov, deputy People's Commissar for Heavy Industry, February 1, 1937; Ya. Gamarnik, deputy People's Commissar for Defense, May 31, 1937; M. Tukhachevsky, CO of the Volga Military District, I. Yakir, CO of the Leningrad Military District, and I. Uborevich, CO of the Byelorussian Military District, all on June 12, 1937. . . .

In May Izvestia *printed forty-year-old notes taken by a Leningrad writer, D. A. Levonevsky, at a historic encounter. Levonevsky was present at the August 14, 1946 meeting at which the Party Central Committee adopted the resolution "On the Magazines* Zvezda *and* Leningrad." *(The decree was formally revoked by the Politburo on October 20, 1988.) The "Zhdanovshchina" targeted primarily, though by no means exclusively, intellectuals and writers, and two of the most prominent were the satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko and the poet Anna Akhmatova. Noting that it was Stalin himself who inspired the "pogram campaign against the creative intelligentsia," the* Izvestia *author adds that such "metastases of authoritarian thinking are hard to get rid of" and cites some recent examples of "administrative interference, absurd prohibitions, and fear of the truth. . . ."*

Levonevsky describes the meeting, attended by six Leningrad authors and editors, Zhdanov—then head of the Leningrad Party organization and "commissar" of ideology—and Stalin. A few quotations are especially revealing:

Zhdanov: ". . . M. Zoshchenko's work about a monkey who jumps about on the shoulders and heads of people standing in a line is absolutely, extraordinarily harmful. The monkey feels bored among people and their stupid ways. The story ["Adventures of a Monkey"] is about the distribution of food in stores and about policemen. Society is depicted in a ridiculous way. 'I raised him like a human being' [the boy in the story says]. Consequently, the monkey is an example for human beings."

Stalin: "And what about the author? To what order of animals does he belong? . . . Writers think that they are not concerned with politics. A person writes something beautiful, and that's all. But there are bad, harmful places in that writing, ideas that poison young people's minds. Why don't I particularly care for people like Zoshchenko? Because they write something that's like an emetic. Can we tolerate having people in leadership positions who allow this to be published? . . . In our country a magazine . . . has no right to accommodate itself to the tastes of people who do not want to recognize our system. Let anyone who does not want to change, such as Zoshchenko, go right to hell. We aren't the ones who should alter our tastes; it's not up to us to accommodate our thoughts and feelings to Zoshchenko and Akhmatova. Can Anna Akhmatova really educate people? Can that fool,

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that farcical story teller and hack writer Zoshchenko, possibly educate people?

—A. Yezhelev, *Izvestia*, "The Stifling Summer of '46," May 21, 1988, p. 3; *CDSP* XL, 23/1988, pp. 16–18.

The rehabilitations are not confined to the dead, or to victims of Stalinist repressions alone. In April 1988 Sobesednik *published a wide-ranging interview with Roy Medvedev, preceded by an explanatory note on Medvedev's "fate."* . . .

A historian, he has concerned himself with little-known pages of our past. Without access to archives, drawing instead on facts published at various times and on the testimony of participants in the events and the recollections of old Bolsheviks, he gradually pieced together, over a period of nearly a decade, the mosaic of his life's main work—the book *Let History Judge*. . . .

The book was largely completed in 1969. But by then a different climate had taken hold in society. The historian had no intention of accommodating himself to it, though Grishin, then First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee, had told him bluntly, "We now have a new line on Stalin." For views incompatible with that "new line," he was expelled from the Party. Yet the scholar had taken issue not with socialist principles but with the distortion of socialism and with a course that led to stagnation, corruption, and a new cult. . . .

We hope that Soviet readers, too, will soon be able to acquaint themselves with the works of Roy Medvedev, their uncompromising fellow countryman—works that are incisive and controversial, that appeal to the voice of conscience in each of us, that are surprisingly truthful and sincere. The times demand these books. . . .

—*Sobesednik* 18, April 1988, pp. 12–13; *CDSP* XL, 24/1988, p. 18.

Not every reader agrees. The following letter—from a historian—is by no means atypical. Pyotr Petrov is reacting to an article by the writer Ales Adamovich, "The war was won by the people" (Moscow News, *9/1988). Adamovich wrote about Stalin's role as head of state during the Second World War, a particularly sensitive subject for many Soviet citizens, and the losses sustained because of his errors and misjudgments. Petrov replies:*

. . . By destroying Stalin you are wiping out all the successes and achievements of that period. You are insulting the memory of our people, reducing everything to the name of one man, but remember that people did a great deal for the country. You don't understand and did not see the enthusiasm with which people built socialism and defended their country in Stalin's name. . . .

You should explain everything. For example, in 1939–1940, when the threat of war was growing, there were many slovenly people—some soldiers and factory workers. That is why the decree had to be adopted, under which anyone twenty minutes late to work was sent to prison. . . .

You don't take into consideration the inertia and resistance of the peasants to the country's rapid advancement. . . . Stalin defended the socialist course adopted by the Party, and he advanced a culturally and economically backward country. You have to explain the complicated personality of Stalin and the complex situation.

—*Moscow News*, 14/1988, p. 2.

Apart from distortions of fact and erroneous inferences, Petrov's letter is unpleasantly sanctimonious. It does, however, reflect genuine pain. Unfortunately, similar distortion comes, with far less excuse, from well-placed sources. Just after the forty-ninth anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Poland there were massive demonstrations in the Baltic republics commemorating their loss of independence. Moscow News *published a two-page discussion of Soviet policy at the start of the war. Five Russian and Baltic historians participated, as did Valentin Falin, former ambassador to West Germany, former chairman of Novosti Press Agency, and now head of the International Department of the Central Committee. A prefatory editorial note describes the rallies and concludes:*

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. . . Decades of hushing up the "blank spots" in our history, while not deciding anything in fact, only promoted deformations in the historical memory of the Soviet peoples and other countries. It is impossible to eliminate these distortions with one stroke, just as it is impossible to make people believe that the past is of no concern to those of us living today. Our country is only beginning to get a real insight into this past of ours. . . .

Falin's comments contribute little by way of "real insight:"

Much is being said about the "secret protocols to the Soviet-German Pact of August 23, 1939." But these "protocols" are known to experts only as "copies" of "copies." Any attempts to find the originals have proved unsuccessful both here and in the West. . . . If the originals are found, they will be assessed. Until then, judging from experience, the "copies of copies" should be handled with the utmost caution.

Why did the subject of the "protocols" arise only in 1946? . . . Washington had full information about the talks on the Soviet-German Pact. Why didn't the United States use this information in 1939 when Soviet-American relations were tense and President Roosevelt was considering severing diplomatic relations with the USSR?

Or: London knew all about the Soviet-German talks. From Goering personally. In the spring of 1940, London planned military strikes at the USSR, but the idea of using the "secret protocols" to discredit Moscow never came up. Why? . . .

The new mode of thinking presupposes, among other things, the need to avoid the extremes, inherent in the past, which doomed us to incorrect and imbalanced judgments divorced from reality. If out of inertia we start painting Stalin as all black and call everything associated with him harmful or even criminal, I don't think that we will be doing service to the objective truth. . . .

—*Moscow News*, 36/1988, pp. 8–9.

The summer's other "anniversary" marked twenty years since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. That subject, too, was presented in the Soviet press in a manner by now uncharacteristically distorted. Most of the articles on the end of the Prague Spring focused on the Czechs' "triumphant choice" of socialism and alliance with the USSR in 1948, the "antisocialist" and "antidemocratic" forces within the Czech Communist party in 1968, and the "propaganda harvest" (as one Izvestia *commentator described it) that the West was trying to reap from the anniversary.*

Even Moscow News, *the most consistent standard-bearer of* glasnost, *twisted itself into knots trying to reconcile what happened with "what happened." The editors held a discussion with six journalists who were in Czechoslovakia when—as the introduction explains—"troops from five Warsaw Treaty member-states entered Czechoslovak territory . . . to put an end to the growing political crisis in that fraternal country, to avert the threat to the Czechoslovak people's socialist gains and to prevent the strategic stability and security of world socialism from being undermined."*

Two of their comments follow:

V. Lukin, *Problems of Peace and Socialism*

It seems to me that many of Czechoslovakia's economic problems were attributable to the country's uncritical adoption of our own model of development at the time. . . . Proponents of the established model . . . shifted the debate to the ideological sphere: If you condemn this model, you're against socialism.

A. Didusenko, *Trud*

Journalists were in a very difficult position. Every day we watched events intensify and contradictions mount, but we couldn't publish anything. . . . In February of 1968, I recall, Leonid Brezhnev flew to Prague. Vasily Zhuravsky [*Pravda* correspondent] and I asked him: "Leonid Ilyich, what are we to do, what are we to write?" And he answered: "Write the truth." Then he thought a moment and added: "One copy of it." Then he thought another moment and said, pointing to an aide, "And send it to him." . . . After the troops entered,

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there were a lot of inaccuracies in our press, some intentional, some not. After all, the situation was very complex and in many ways unclear. It was hardest of all for the special correspondents who were given orders from above. Sometimes the facts were tailored to fit those orders. . . .

—*Moscow News*, 35/1988, pp. 6–7; *CDSP* XL, 34/1988, pp. 5–7.

Reclaiming the Past

Restructuring has already uncovered many layers of the difficult Stalinist past. Voices have begun to be heard: "Perhaps that's enough? Let's tackle the present." But no—that's not enough. For we are only feeling our way along the approaches to this most complex subject—the building of socialism in the USSR. It is in the past that we must seek the answers to very many current questions. How long and assiduously we gauged our understanding of phenomena in social life by Stalin's Talmudic "first, second, third" and by his definitions. To this day we are still the "heirs of that time," horrified by unorthodox thinking, allergic to opinions that are at variance with primers and reference books, apologists (often now camouflaged as a "well-considered" and "principled approach") for what, in the guise of socialism, did indeed constitute a gross distortion of Leninist ideas about that society. Some people were unwilling to realize that real successes were achieved not in the name of, but in spite of, Stalin. . . .

—*Sotsialisticheskaya industria*, June 23, 1988, pp. 2–3; FBIS, July 1, 1988, pp. 46–49.

Thus begins an article by Professors O. Volobuyev and S. Kuleshov, both on the faculty of the Moscow Higher Party School. They proceed to analyze aspects of Stalin's domestic policies, based in part on marginal notes scribbled by Stalin into books found in his library. The following three-way discussion, appearing in Pravda *last summer, exemplifies some of the problems they touch on, particularly the "camouflaged" apologias. The first writer, Pobisk Kuznetsov, is responding to an article by Yuri Afanasyev, rector of the Archivists' Institute, on* perestroika *and historical knowledge; its substance is clear from his comments. Afanasyev's reply was published a month later, "unabridged and unedited" according to the* Pravda *editors, and was followed by an editorial commentary.*

Questions to a Historian

Let me say right away that there is quite a lot in the article that is correct and generally acknowledged. . . . But it also contains assertions that give rise to puzzling questions. . . .

We read, for example: "Recently another method has appeared and is being tried out—an attempt to create in the Soviet people's social consciousness a kind of hybrid image—a Shchedrin-like symbiosis of two parts: 'On the one hand, on the other hand.' On the one hand, mass repressions and crimes, on the other hand daily happiness and the achievement of records. And let there be no sullying of our glorious past!"

The author himself considers, and rightly so, that we will not be able to move forward if we now pin all the responsibility for our misfortunes on Stalin alone. . . . "Many would like to sacrifice Stalin so as to save Stalinism. But that would also mean missing the very nub of the problem, evading the question of how far Stalin was the creator and at the same time the product of a system which was consolidated during his period in power." Thus the question is asked but left unanswered. Meanwhile our literature already deals quite thoroughly with the way Stalinism and the personality cult arose, the role played by the character of Stalin, and the role played by objective circumstances. . . .

The author asks: Why did we build things in such a way that they must now be restructured? Putting the question this way effectively asserts that our initial path was mistaken in advance. . . . Although this question has already been examined with the utmost clarity in party documents published in connection with the seventieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution, the author clearly has his own particular opinion on this score—which, of

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course, is not forbidden—and asks questions which again he does not answer and to which perhaps he has no answers. . . .

Historically the question was different: As the trailblazers of socialism, equipped with Lenin's guidelines for building socialism, we were unable and did not know how to be completely consistent, and external circumstances denied us that opportunity. That is why, the further we went, the more we deviated from Lenin's concept of socialism and thus produced a deformed socialist society. It is that deformed society and not the path we traveled after October that we are rebuilding. We have not turned away from the path begun by the October Revolution, as Doctor of Historical Sciences Yu. N. Afanasyev thinks; otherwise there would be no socialism in the world. But, of course, we have not taken that path in the way that Lenin saw it. . . .

In the article under review the search for the causes of these deviations is in no way correlated with the real course of events or the policy of the period 1928–1929. You look in vain here for an answer to the question of how far those deviations were the result of subjectivist tyranny and how far they were dictated by objective economic reality and were the direct or indirect result of the triumph of the Bukharin and Stalin bloc during the struggle against the opposition in 1925. Clearly, the author prefers the assertion that during the 1920s there existed a Bukharinist alternative which was undoubtedly more attractive. . . .

The question is: Why does this article, which claims to be the program of a modern approach to historical knowledge, consciously leave unanswered the question of whether the society created in our country is or was truly socialist. Is it not because the article is trying to "inculcate" these doubts and the conclusions that arise from them in the masses, and not just among historians.

. . . Yu. N. Afanasyev's witting or unwitting attempt to "repudiate" V.I. Lenin in developing a concept of socialism causes nothing but bewilderment. The concept of socialism is constituted by a determinate aggregate of ideas. It must be expressed without fail in the form of a catechism. It stems from the totality of Lenin's works. . . . It is quite strange to read [Afanasyev's] claim that the existence of two systems—capitalism and socialism—in our era was in no way envisaged by the classic Marxist-Leninists. What it boils down to is: Either Lenin is no longer considered a classic source, or we are asked to forget that we owe to him the idea of the peaceful coexistence of two systems. . . .

—*Pravda*, June 25, 1988, p. 3;
FBIS July 11, 1988, pp. 71–74

The Historian's Answers

1 July 1988 . . . Let us go on to the . . . most important "puzzling" question, which, in turn, consists of two questions: (a) Is it possible to say that under Stalin and his successors a socialist society, albeit insufficiently socialist, was indeed built; (b) Was there a historical alternative to "Stalinist socialism," or was Lenin with his NEP [the New Economic Program], which he envisaged as a serious and long-term policy, tragically mistaken—so that the result of October could not have been anything other than a bloody, dictatorial regime? My "subjective hypotheses" . . . are that (a) "Despite tremendous sacrifices, we did not get socialism in the form in which Lenin and the Leninist guard envisaged it in the twenties," hence the need for *revolutionary,* that is, profound, structural restructuring; and (b) The counterrevolutionary path of Stalin and his enormous apparatus was not historically inevitable and therefore justified, hence the opportunity in the course of restructuring to build on the unrealized, curtailed, alternative economic, political, legal, and sociopsychological potential of our country.

We have the chance to revive Leninist principles under new conditions, conditions that are in part more favorable than in the late twenties and the thirties and in part far more difficult, because we are dealing not with the threat of the emergence of an inhuman, regimented "socialism," but with the consequences of the prolonged dominance of that system. To this day it has not been eradicated to its foundations, and it is in no hurry to give

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way voluntarily to true socialism, that is, democratic socialism.

How does my opponent, who so heatedly rejects any "untruths or half-truths," respond to this—I hope, sufficiently clear—point of view? His response is that, "in using Lenin's guidelines for building socialism . . . we were unable to be entirely consistent, we did not know how, and moreover external conditions did not give us that opportunity, . . . and as a result we got a deformed socialist society." "Us," "we" . . . is that not charming? "We"—that means millions of prisoners under the leadership of Yagoda, Yezhov, Beria. "Us"—that means the enslaved, robbed, unhappy peasant who was annihilated as a class under the leadership of Stalin and the Stalinist "cohort." "Us"—that means the people who accomplished the great revolution and were deceived and thwarted in their enthusiasm, in their unreasoning faith, in their distrust that grew up over sixty years, in their spiritual aridity and degeneration, the long-suffering Soviet people—together with those who unrestrainedly and habitually ordered them around. Oh, Comrade P. Kuznetsov! Thank you for an explanation so far removed from anything dubious or untruthful.

We must remember that Stalin repealed the NEP, turned the Bolshevik party (no, not single-handedly, but as head of a whole social stratum) into an "order of knights," broke off the alliance with the peasantry, subjected the workers to regimented discipline, suppressed or destroyed the intelligentsia, and made blood and terror the foundation of the state because he "was unable to be entirely consistent" with regard to "Lenin's guidelines" . . . and in fact, this "inconsistent" transformation of socialist guidelines into totalitarian and terrorist ones was historically inevitable.

If *that* is "inconsistency," a "deviation" justified, moreover, by "circumstances," if "we," even in the camps into which we (and you too) were thrown, "did not turn aside from the path opened up by October," then, for heaven's sake, what kind of idea of that path, of October, of Lenin, lies behind these incantatory formulas that are still so widespread among us?! What use are the subsequent phrases about the "bitter errors and tragic crimes of the past," phrases which nobody dares do without today, if "we" (including P. Kuznetsov) do not dare to think anything at all through to its conclusion? . . .

Afanasyev then refutes the specific points raised by Kuznetsov. His letter closes:

P. Kuznetsov can think what he likes, but I, after seventy years of progress toward socialism (not away from it) according to "Lenin's guidelines," see the rationing system in 1988 and Russians in remote areas populated by many millions of people dreaming of an adulterated cooked sausage; I see that thirty-five years after Stalin's death we are only just "learning democracy" like backward fifteen-year-olds in the primary grades and only achieving average grades at that. Thinking about this, I would be ashamed to talk about "enforced inconsistency" and "deformations" along an invariably glorious path. Much has changed in the last three years—and we can no longer bear to give up hope. The hope of socialism, of labor freely undertaken, prosperity, and democracy.

There are so many questions, to historians and to politicians. And the answers are diverse and contentious. But I think that something cannot be disputed: Whether it was socialism or "regimented socialism" (that is, "on the one hand" half in clover, "on the other hand" half in a wretched plight), we will find out only five or ten years from now. . . . Either we will become a completely different country, an unrecognizably different and flourishing society . . . or we will continue our profound arguments about a certain "inconsistency" of socialism, without freedom and without bread and butter. But how much time will history leave us for this intoxicating casuistry?

—*Pravda,* July 26, 1988, p. 3,
FBIS, July 27, 1988, pp. 40–42.

From the Editorial Office

So, the questions have been asked and the answers given. Perhaps we could have left it at that and allowed the readers to judge whether the viewpoints presented are right or wrong. But the newspaper cannot remain silent on

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some of Professor Yu. N. Afanasyev's opinions.

To the question of P. Kuznetsov's article as to whether the society created in our country is (or was) a socialist society, Professor Afanasyev declares quite clearly and categorically: "I do not consider the society we have created to be a socialist society, even a 'deformed' one." Can Yu. N. Afanasev have "forgotten" that in our country we have not "proclaimed" but created a socialist economic system based on social ownership of the means of production, that we have no class of exploiters and no unemployment, that from the very first steps of socialism in the USSR such features as the absence of the exploitation of man by man and the fundamentally new objectives of socioeconomic progress have been asserted and remain unchanged? This can hardly be a question of forgetfulness.

. . . It is not hard to see that [Afanasyev's] "platform" differs strikingly from the party assessments and conclusions elaborated collectively, with a sense of historical responsibility and on the basis of historical truth, and from the objective, dialectical picture of our achievements and failures, severe tests, and undoubted gains on the path of socialist building and its heroic and dramatic aspects. And most important, in this and other articles by Yu. N. Afanasyev and in his numerous speeches and interviews, where the author does not mince his words and even seems to be deliberately making them sharp and challenging, it is difficult, if indeed possible, to find a constructive approach, a serious scientific analysis of concrete facts and documents. . . .

Seeking to prove that it is necessary to start all over again, to create a contemporary theory of socialism anew "with Lenin's help," Yu. N. Afanasyev at the same time denies the existence of the concept of socialism in Lenin too. It is no use "merely seeking" it in Lenin's work, he says. But who today believes that Lenin's legacy must "merely" be studied mechanically, rather than in dialectical interaction with the present day?

. . . [Millions] worked, overcoming the difficulties created by the atmosphere of repressions and lawlessness, the overcentralized command-and-administer system, and various kinds of deformations and deviations from socialism, which caused cruel losses.

. . . Can one be ironic about the feat accomplished by the people in these highly difficult conditions, can one forget that? History is irreversible, you cannot rectify it or rework it—it is necessary to interpret it profoundly and responsibly and learn its lessons, which is what the party and people are doing today. . . .

—*FBIS*, pp. 42–44.

* * * *

(I am sure all the readers of Dissent *will join in thanking Josephine Woll for her excellent sampling from Soviet writers and thinkers as they try to face the past honestly and critically. For people like myself—those who over the decades participated in the often lonely and painful struggle of the anti-Stalinist left—there is something tremendously moving in reading some of these excerpts. They seem astonishingly like the things we wrote over the last fifty years, often to the disdain of those who had yielded themselves to the falsehoods of Stalinism. It gives one renewed hope in the capacities of serious men and women to reach for the truth. The "captive minds"—at least some of them—shook off their captivity as soon as they could. More, much more remains to be said, more of the terrible truth, more about the time of murder and repression. Let the discussion continue, and we will listen with awe and fascination.—I.H.)*

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Jefferson Morley and Malcolm Byrne

THE DRUG WAR AND "NATIONAL SECURITY"

The Making of a Quagmire, 1969–1973

As long as there exists a narcotics problem, intelligence agencies will be involved.

—William Colby, Director of Central Intelligence in *Perspective of the Intelligence Community*, August 1973.

The war on drugs is entering its twentieth year. On October 24, 1969, President Richard Nixon called a press conference to issue the initial declaration of war. Every president since has escalated the hostilities. President-elect Bush promises to do the same. Yet there is still no prospect of success.

To understand why the drug war has failed, we need to go back to its earliest days, between 1969 and 1973, when current U.S. strategy was established and failure institutionalized. Then, as now, conventional law enforcement agencies were judged incapable of handling the antidrug effort; then, as now, the White House organized (and reorganized) the antidrug effort; then, as now, "better intelligence" was demanded from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); then, as now, investigations into the drug trade were launched by Congress and resisted by the Executive. Most important, between 1969 and 1973 drug enforcement became a matter of U.S. "national security."

The perverse effects of linking drug enforcement and U.S. security quickly became apparent, if not entirely understood. *The same aides to President Nixon who were in charge of the war on drugs were also in charge of the Watergate breakin in 1972.* Their dual roles as drug warriors and Plumbers belied an underlying congruence of interests between "drug enforcement" and "national security" as defined by all the president's men.

Individual skullduggery aside, the early days of the drug war saw the White House take over the antidrug effort, the CIA formalize its narcotics intelligence collection, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) brought into existence. This is where national security became important. Egil Krogh, the number-one drug warrior and Plumber in the Nixon White House, described the bureaucratic challenge at a 1971 antidrug meeting: "Ways [must] be found to make our narcotics suppression effort consistent with the requirements of national security."

"To understand government you must first understand the paperflow," says award-winning investigative reporter Scott Armstrong, head of the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. Yet even after twenty years the paperflow that documents and directs the war on drugs is, to an astonishing degree, deliberately hidden from the American people. What little documentation is available covers the years 1969 to 1973. But this somewhat obscure history is critical to understanding the war on drugs today, because it was in those years that the operations of the drug enforcement bureaucracy and the national security bureaucracy were formally coordinated. There

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do not seem to have been substantive changes in the years since.

The House and Senate opened investigations in the early 1970s of the DEA and the CIA. The Rockefeller Report on the CIA discussed, cursorily, the agency's relationship with drug traffickers. Two books, Alfred McCoy's *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (1973) and Edward J. Epstein's *Agency of Fear* (1977), examined how antidrug efforts had been compromised by U.S. intelligence operatives and White House operatives.

The findings of these inquiries in the mid-1970s, if less than exhaustive, indicated that the drug war was a fiasco. The DEA was found to be remarkably corrupt at its highest levels. The CIA regularly fixed drug cases between 1972 and 1976—and the Justice Department regularly approved. That was the state of things in 1976 when George Bush became director of the Central Intelligence Agency and when Jimmy Carter came to office. The drug enforcement–national security issue faded over the next decade, to be revived with the indictment of Panamanian dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega, a longtime CIA informant, on drug-trafficking charges.

We tell below the story of four high-level participants in the early years of the drug war. None is involved today, yet their generic roles are familiar, having been assumed by others. In their stories we can see what we have learned since the early 1970s—and what we have forgotten.

I. A Cop

Of the fifteen federal agencies initially responsible for fighting President Nixon's drug war in 1969, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) was first among equals. Its director was John Ingersoll, a career law-enforcement officer appointed during the Johnson administration. Ingersoll impressed Attorney General John Mitchell enough to be able to keep his job under the new regime.

Ingersoll faced tough challenges from the start. His agency had too little intelligence on the drug situation and not enough agents to take advantage of the information it had. He also faced corruption, turf battles with rival agencies, and an intrusive White House staff trying to impose their political agenda.

Domestically, BNDD never had the benefit of reliable statistics, without which it was impossible to evaluate antidrug programs. A study commissioned by the White House in August 1971 found that crucial figures on drug use, numbers of addicts, and the link between drugs and crime were "not known to within a factor of four or five." Overseas, the problem was worse. Ingersoll made foreign drug interdiction a top priority in 1969 and requested (and apparently received) help from both the CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA). But BNDD never managed to isolate all the sources of narcotics abroad and was even less successful at pinning down the possible routes for shipping drugs into the United States.

Even when BNDD could identify big-time drug entrepreneurs abroad, Ingersoll complained that they were usually protected by corrupt local officials on the payrolls of the dealers. Frustrated, Ingersoll suggested at one point that the only way to get at the kingpins was to assassinate them. As part of an early effort to expand BNDD's effectiveness abroad, he drafted a plan suggesting a fund "set up along the lines of the CIA" to carry out "disruptive activities." Ingersoll later claimed not to have been thinking of assassinations, but, as we shall see, others in the government were not so restrained.

Ingersoll was just as concerned about corruption of officials at home. Agents in the New York office of the Bureau of Narcotics (the predecessor of BNDD) were either protecting drug dealers or trafficking heroin themselves. He blamed the bureau's system of basing promotions on fulfilling arrest quotas. Quotas, he felt, encouraged agents to become dependent on informants, and informants were merely drug entrepreneurs who understood that they could obtain government protection by ratting on the competition. The temptation for many agents to become involved in the growing drug business was irresistible.

Ingersoll also faced obstacles in his relations with his fellow drug enforcement bureaucrats and the White House. He succeeded in establishing BNDD as the lead agency in overseas interdiction. This bureaucratic coup,

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coming at the expense of the Customs Service, wound up hurting the drug campaign by fostering hard feelings among officials whose only hope for success lay in cooperation.

Ingersoll resisted the efforts of Nixon's aides to draw him into political stunts, such as high-profile arrests of international drug figures, because he believed their impact on the drug war would be negligible or counterproductive. At one point in 1971, he refused point-blank a White House request to boost the number of narcotics arrests for the sake of Nixon's re-election campaign.

Ingersoll also suspected, with justification, that the White House wanted to take over BNDD's authority. One evening in December, 1971, he "almost fell out of my chair" while watching an NBC documentary that included a staged meeting on narcotics enforcement attended by Nixon, to which he, Ingersoll, hadn't even been invited. Sensing a hostile takeover, he made a frantic call to Mitchell, who assured him he knew of no plans to remove him.

Within a month of Ingersoll's phone call to Mitchell, Myles Ambrose, the Customs Commissioner, was appointed head of the newly created Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE), an organization with unprecedented enforcement powers. Ingersoll's BNDD was reduced to a supporting role. Ingersoll, who finally quit in mid-1973, was America's first drug czar and he failed—as has every drug czar since, including George Bush. The White House staff, for political reasons, wanted to control the war on drugs.

Since then every administration has followed this same procedure. One official is designated to run the drug war. Caught in the vast currents of corruption, politics, and the growing demand for drugs, this "czar" fails. Congress, the media, and the public then demand a real "drug czar," meaning a federal official of higher rank, under stricter White House control, with greater operational powers and less congressional oversight. And so it goes.

II. A White House Aide

The White House point man in the drug war was Egil "Bud" Krogh. As Edward Jay Epstein notes in *Agency of Fear*, it was Krogh who first linked drugs with crime, a key plank in Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign. Borrowing the theory that drug abuse leads to crime, Krogh suggested in early 1970 that attacking the former problem was the way to crack the latter. Thus was the drug war established as a high priority in the White House.

Krogh was quickly frustrated both by the stonewalling of suspicious bureaucrats and the inability of the drug agencies to cooperate with each other. For example, when Krogh couldn't convince the Treasury Department to share information about an IRS program to seize the assets of suspected drug traffickers, Krogh turned to two willing colleagues—Myles Ambrose of Customs and G. Gordon Liddy, then an aide at the Treasury Department, who gave him the information he wanted. Krogh and his boss, John Ehrlichman, soon concluded that the answer to the drug problem lay in gaining White House control over the drug enforcement and intelligence agencies.

An unexpected event added urgency to the White House's campaign to centralize drug enforcement intelligence. In June 1971, during one of the administration's well-orchestrated media blitzes on the drug war, the *New York Times* stole the headlines by publishing the Pentagon Papers. Krogh was already developing an intelligence/enforcement weapon for White House use in the drug war. His new assignment, to head something called the Special Investigations Unit, was quite similar. Ehrlichman assigned a National Security Council (NSC) staff investigator to the group. Rounding out the principal actors in the new unit were Krogh's old spy from the Treasury, Gordon Liddy, and a pal of Liddy's, former CIA agent E. Howard Hunt. The drug warriors became the Plumbers.

The CIA had proved helpful. Liddy had received CIA security clearances for his antidrug efforts on behalf of the White House in December 1969. In 1971 Erlichman told Robert Cushman, CIA deputy director, that Hunt had "carte blanche" from the White House; Cushman provided logistical help for Hunt.

The drug warriors and Plumbers soon went to work on a series of ventures that blurred the

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distinction between drug enforcement and "national security." One of Hunt's first acts was to break into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, using a plan drawn up by Krogh. Soon afterward, Hunt got a job for an old friend, former CIA agent Lt. Col. Lucien John Conein, as head of strategic intelligence for BNDD. Conein later admitted his purpose was to oversee a unit that could be used to assassinate drug traffickers.

Hunt apparently did not limit himself to spying. While working for the Plumbers, he also reportedly recruited Cubans for hit squads aimed at Latin American drug dealers. *Newsweek* reported that Hunt traveled to Mexico with one such team just before a plot to kill Panama's Omar Torrijos was aborted.

The establishment of the Plumbers unit represented a grafting together of drug enforcement and national security. Although the target of each sphere of activity was different—drug traffickers and abusers versus Nixon's "enemies"—both shared the ultimate goal of establishing White House authority over an investigative and enforcement apparatus that could be used for any "national security" purpose White House aides chose.

In September 1971, Krogh was named by Nixon to be executive director of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control (CCINC), which was set up to coordinate the "global war" on drugs. Nominally chaired by Secretary of State William Rogers and including Richard Helms among its members, the group was left to the daily charge of Krogh.

The creation of the CCINC was followed by the creation of the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement in January 1972; ODALE was the brainchild of none other than Gordon Liddy. In August 1972, the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence (ONNI) was established by the White House; the original idea for ONNI was credited to Hunt. The office ran a domestic spying operation using agents detailed from the CIA and elsewhere.

Krogh drew up plans for yet another antidrug agency, this one to be called the Drug Enforcement Administration. When a prominent physician told Krogh he opposed the idea, Krogh retorted, "Anyone who opposes us, we'll destroy. As a matter of fact, anyone who doesn't support us, we'll destroy."

Krogh never quite fulfilled the quest of his superiors for a super agency that would serve their political ends under the guise of fighting the drug war. Myles Ambrose, the Customs Commissioner, was slated to become the first head of DEA. Then in May 1973 it was revealed he had visited a gun smuggler at his large ranch on the Texas-Mexico border. Ambrose said his resignation "had nothing to do with Watergate."

Within days of the creation of the DEA in July 1973, the new agency received credible reports from a reliable undercover agent about a $300,000 heroin deal financed by Robert Vesco. This financier-con man employed two relatives of President Richard Nixon and had contributed $200,000 to the Nixon campaign fund. The DEA immediately shut down its investigation of the case and withdrew the undercover agent.

The agent went public with his story in November 1973. On November 27, the *New York Times* reported that the Senate was investigating the charges. That same day, Nixon attended a CCINC meeting and emphasized that he wanted to "continue his personal involvement in drug control as appropriate."

But by that time the Watergate scandal was engulfing Nixon and control of the DEA was slipping away. The Senate investigation of the Vesco coverup eventually led to a broader investigation of the DEA, which concluded in 1975 that the agency's "environment was conducive to corrupt and irregular practices." Vesco had long since fled to Costa Rica and then the Bahamas, where he remained strangely immune to extradition attempts. If anything, Ingersoll's corruption problem was worse than ever. The problem was not merely individual corruption for financial gain but systematic corruption for "national security" reasons.

Egil Krogh spent four months in jail for his role in the Watergate coverup, then took a job with the Swenson Ice Cream Company.

III. A CIA Director

Richard Helms viewed his role in the drug war narrowly. As Director of Central Intelligence

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(DCI) from 1967 to 1973, he sought to improve the CIA's knowledge of the international drug trade. A lifelong, strait-laced CIA bureaucrat, Helms was not one to share his information with others, certainly not the judiciary. He resisted investigation or prosecution of suspected drug traffickers that might disrupt CIA operations. Helms's tenure at the CIA had a perverse and enduring effect on the drug war: The more the CIA learned about the drug trade, the less the rest of the U.S. government could attack it.

Helms was DCI at a time of historical transition for the world drug trade. The heroin business, based in Southeast Asia, although it had enjoyed explosive growth in the 1960s, was already beginning to level off. Latin America was emerging as a center of drug commerce, first as a transshipment point for heroin refined in Europe, then as a production center for cocaine.

Helms's first step in the drug war was to establish the Office of Narcotics Coordinator in late 1969, which was to supply both the White House and the BNDD with routine drug intelligence. For example, the CIA supplied the BNDD with a report "Cocaine Trafficking Network in Colombia."

Helms, wanting to know more about the Latin America drug trade, established a secret program in the Miami office of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs known as "BUNCION" and later, DEACON I. This was the program in which Hunt placed his friend Lucien Conein. Its purposes have been variously described as assassination, "counterintelligence," and "agent recruitment." Various sources say that thirty to sixty CIA operatives were hired for the war on drugs through DEACON I.

Helms also had access to findings of the National Security Agency, the supersecret organization that can intercept electronic communications almost anywhere in the world. The agency informally obtained valuable drug-related material from NSA eavesdropping operations. Some of this intelligence was passed along to the White House.

There were, however, limits to CIA cooperation. In late March 1971, Egil Krogh told the Narcotics Office that CIA station chiefs needed to be reminded "that their role in narcotics intelligence collection overseas was an active role." At Cabinet-level meetings in November 1971 and February 1972, Krogh asked for more help from the CIA.

Helms and his top aide, General Robert Cushman (the fellow who aided Howard Hunt), fended off this pressure. Cushman, according to the minutes of the November meeting, responded that the CIA did not have "the assets or expertise required to do the job by itself." In December 1971, Nixon tried to incorporate CIA operatives into ODALE, one of the many antidrug agencies he established. Helms got the CIA taken out of the picture.

The conflict between Helms's CIA and Nixon's White House came to a head in February 1972. When the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control convened for an unusual two-day meeting, CIA involvement in the drug war was discussed. Also on the agenda was drug enforcement in Southeast Asia. Whether the two discussions were in any way related is not known.

It is known that Nelson Gross, the State Department representative on the committee, criticized the CIA's involvement in the drug war. It is also known that the committee received a State Department report citing "corruption and indifference" of top narcotics officials in Thailand and South Vietnam.

According to partially declassified minutes of the meeting, one of Helms's assistants stated in response to criticisms of the CIA that Nixon's drug war "raised two problems for the Agency. First, a mechanism for coordinating with law enforcement agencies was needed." Second, the aide said, there was a problem of "adjusting Agency priorities." The Agency had "moved slowly for good reason," the official said.

Helms himself attended the meeting (which apparently was also unusual) and spoke. According to the minutes, the CIA insisted that it had to "protect intelligence officers and sources abroad from investigative or legal disclosures. Otherwise the intelligence community will find itself where it cannot afford to go—in court as a witness."

The threat of "investigative or legal" disclosures of CIA involvement in drug traffick-

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ing was growing. In March and May, columnist Jack Anderson reported on the involvement of top Panamanian officials in drug trafficking. Helms quickly invited the investigative reporter to lunch, apparently trying to learn what he knew. According to Anderson, Congressman Charles Rangel had asked Helms for ten CIA studies on worldwide drug routes to the United States. Helms refused.

Helms was on the defensive. In June 1972, the month of the Watergate break-in, he reorganized the Office of Narcotics Coordinator. The head of the new office was told to avoid involvement in domestic enforcement operations as well as foreign operations targeted against American citizens.

Despite the private White House criticisms, the CIA could count on public support from Nixon. In July Alfred McCoy published his book *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia,* which documented the Agency's congenial relations with heroin kingpins. The CIA could only rebut several minor details of McCoy's thesis. In September Jack Anderson, citing documents from the CIA and other intelligence agencies, confirmed that U.S. ground and air equipment had "formed the backbone of the Laos opium trade." Nevertheless, ten days later, Nixon declared that CIA had "performed superbly" in the drug war.

Helms continued to develop drug intelligence. He met with John Ingersoll in October about DEACON I. Helms offered to recruit a former CIA contract employee to work for BNDD in Miami. The BNDD, according to Agency documents, used him as a "live source for information concerning Latin American narcotics traffickers and their organized crime connections in Miami." That same month Helms, at the request of the National Security Agency, authorized a CIA program to intercept the radio transmissions of drug traffickers in the United States and South America.

But on November 20, two weeks after Nixon won reelection by a landslide, the president suddenly fired Helms as Director of Central Intelligence. Within nine months, Helms's actions in the drug war were the subject of reappraisal within the agency.

The electronic surveillance operation was suspended in January 1973 when the CIA General Counsel told Helms it was illegal. Helms left his post on February 3, 1973, and became ambassador to Iran. In May 1973, the CIA acknowledged that it had helped Liddy in his narcotics work in 1969. That same month, the story of DEACON I was included in the agency's compilation of all of its possible abuses of power. By the fall of 1973, William Colby, the new director of the CIA, had discontinued DEACON I.

In 1976, the Ford Justice Department launched its inquiry into CIA electronic surveillance activities. That was when the CIA's tampering with major narcotics cases was documented. The most important question facing the Justice Department was whether to take Helms to court for his role in the CIA's illegal wiretapping programs. Helms was allowed to plead nolo contendere. The agency's program of leniency for suspected drug traffickers remained a secret.

IV. A Drug Kingpin

"We'd been after the guy for years," says one DEA agent of Rafael Alarcon. In the early years of the drug war, Alarcon was a versatile and disloyal soldier: He was both the chief of drug enforcement in Chile and a major cocaine trafficker. He was not the first national-security drug enforcer to prosper because of the operating procedures established in the early years of the war on drugs. Nor was he the last.

The Alarcon case ties together the stories of Ingersoll, Krogh, and Helms. By July 1973, when the DEA came into existence, Ingersoll had been forced out and Ambrose disgraced. The White House then named an amiable federal prosecutor named John Bartels to head the DEA. The CIA operatives installed in the new agency quickly convinced Bartels to establish what was called an "overseas source registry"—a listing of suspected drug traffickers. The agency then recruited the targets of DEA investigations to serve as CIA sources—including one longtime narcotics suspect by the name of Rafael Alarcon.

The agency was deeply involved in efforts

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to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende. Alarcon, from his position as head of the narcotics and gambling brigade of the Chilean federal police since 1969, provided the Agency with electronic surveillance information.

Alarcon, at the time, was prospering as the middleman in a lucrative Santiago–to–New York cocaine connection. He introduced the Chilean manufacturer to the distributor and received one thousand dollars for every kilo of cocaine shipped to New York. Federal prosecutors estimated that the Chileans were shipping scores of kilos every year.

Ironically, Alarcon lost his job after the CIA-sponsored destabilization campaign succeeded in September 1973 and General Augusto Pinochet took power. The dictator purged the government of dozens of corrupt officials, some of whom squealed to the DEA about their superiors. In April 1974, a New York grand jury secretly indicted Alarcon and four other senior Chilean police officers.

Charles Cecil, a DEA agent in Santiago, then asked the U.S. Embassy to ask Pinochet to extradite the cocaine kingpin. When the CIA station chief in Santiago objected, saying that Alarcon had been a useful asset, the issue was kicked back to DEA headquarters in Washington. The DEA was prepared to accept the CIA's argument, when somebody took a shot at Charles Cecil as he drove with his wife in Santiago.

Nobody ever proved the gunman was connected to Alarcon, but suspicions ran high. The DEA decided it had to protect its agent in the field. The United States requested extradition and Pinochet obliged. In late August 1974, Alarcon was kidnapped from his home, handcuffed, and put on a plane to New York.

Alarcon promptly threatened the prosecutors with graymail. Alarcon informed them that he was working for the CIA and claimed the agency knew all about his drug smuggling. Whether the claim was true or not, the CIA, now under the direction of Helms's successor, William Colby, intervened on Alarcon's behalf. The CIA told the prosecutors that Alarcon was a valuable source. The DEA insisted on seeing the wiretapping information that Alarcon had provided and found it contained little of interest to anyone.

Nevertheless, the CIA prevailed. Alarcon's case was taken away from the federal prosecutors in Manhattan and given to the Brooklyn prosecutors. A memorandum of mitigating circumstances was entered in Alarcon's file, and he was allowed to plead to minor charges. The leader of an international narcotics syndicate received all of three years in jail.

The 1976 Justice Department inquiry into CIA electronic surveillance activities listed the Alarcon case as one of several drug investigations that had to be curbed or killed in order to protect CIA "sources and methods." In 1976 the Criminal Division of the Justice Department, the attorney general of the United States (Edward Levi), and the Ford White House were all apparently informed of the good fortune of Alarcon and several other drug traffickers. By 1976 Colby had been succeeded as DCI by George Bush. The president-elect refuses to say if he was informed at that time of the CIA's intervention on behalf of Rafael Alarcon.

Alarcon's whereabouts today are not known.

V. A Familiar Story

The cycle of failure between 1969 and 1973 repeated itself in the 1980s. The acronyms rolled on, crushing all comprehension. BNDD, ODALE, ONNI, and DEA were followed in 1982 by the SFTF (South Florida Task Force), which was replaced in 1983 by NNBIS (National Narcotics Border Interdiction Service), which was in turn replaced in 1985 by NDEP (National Drug Enforcement Policy Board), now known as NDP (National Drug Policy Board). President-elect Bush has promised a new agency and presumably a new acronym.

The experiences of Ingersoll, Krogh, Helms, and Alarcon recurred. Like Ingersoll, Francis "Bud" Mullen, the head of the DEA in the early 1980s, denounced the politicization of the drug war by the White House and effectively ended his own career. Oliver North (a clean-cut kid like Krogh) used drug enforcement as a cover for "national-security" operations. William Casey (a man who kept secrets, like

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Richard Helms) assisted the White House's abuses of power in the drug war and ignored the needs of drug enforcement. Manuel Antonio Noriega, an intelligence officer turned drug trafficker (like Alarcon), enjoyed a cozy relationship with the CIA that enabled him to escape the full weight of the law.

It should be clear by now that "the war on drugs" is not merely dogged—it is dominated—by the contradictions between drug enforcement and national security. The problem of personal corruption, while serious and growing, is modest compared to the systemic corruption of drug enforcement by national security doctrine.

The systemic corruption is in the nature of the drug war. It works like this. Civilian political authorities demand better drug intelligence. The best way—often the only way—to gather such intelligence is to do business with drug traffickers. There is a way to do this that is sanctioned by law, the Congress, the president, and national security doctrine: covert operations. Such operations require people who can work clandestinely, keep tabs on their rivals, operate small aircraft, conceal cargo, launder money, and employ violence selectively. Not everyone who can do all these things is a drug trafficker, but many are. Covert operations and the drug trade always—always—overlap in the shadowy corner called "drug intelligence." Colby did not misspeak: "As long as there exists a narcotics problem, intelligence agencies will be involved."

The catch is that conducting covert operations and improving drug intelligence inevitably means deeper governmental collaboration with drug traffickers. But there is an even more disturbing logic to the drug enforcement-national security system. There is every reason to believe that the CIA continues to protect "intelligence officers and sources abroad from investigative or legal disclosures." Thus, drug traffickers who can identify such officers or who serve (à la Alarcon and Noriega) as "sources" will enjoy a competitive advantage over their commercial rivals. Drug entrepreneurs with relationships to the intelligence community are less likely to be driven out of business than are their less well-connected competitors. In the long run, then, it is not illogical to assume that the drug business will be increasingly dominated by trafficking organizations that can count on protection from the U.S. government. To update Colby: the larger the drug problem, the larger the involvement of the intelligence community.

It is not necessary to claim that senior national security policymakers condone drug trafficking because they are corrupt or inept. Far from it. They condone drug trafficking because it is often the only way to conduct a far-reaching program of covert action. Our notions of drug enforcement and national security are mutually exclusive. □

Eric Gravely provided research for this article.

Sources

This article is based in part on a declassified version of a "Top Secret" Justice Department report entitled, "Inquiry Into CIA-related Electronic Surveillance Activities." The document is available at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. The article also draws on several books about the Watergate scandal. Among these are Edward Jay Epstein's *Agency of Fear*, Thomas Powers's biography of Richard Helms, *The Man Who Kept Secrets*, and Anthony Lukas's *Nightmare*. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* (which published Jack Anderson) were invaluable.

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Abraham Brumberg

POLAND: STATE AND/OR SOCIETY

The See-Saw Between Government and Solidarity

DECEMBER 1, 1988

Warsaw in early September 1988 was a city swept by an air of excitement, hope, and nervous anticipation. The government had just announced a course of action designed—or so it would seem—to set Poland on the road to economic and political well-being.

It was all grimly familiar. Exactly two years before, the government had proclaimed a sweeping amnesty for political prisoners. It would no longer "repress" or "discriminate against" anyone "for his or her convictions." Instead, it would search for a "dialogue" with the political opposition, including "persons from the realistically oriented bodies of former Solidarity." Censorship would be curbed; private individuals would be allowed to found "independent" journals; new electoral laws for "people's councils" (local administrative bodies) and eventually the Sejm (parliament) would soon be put into effect.

After a year, with only a few of the promises fulfilled and many an expectation dampened, the regime set the stage for another surge of wary optimism. This time there would be a national referendum to determine whether the populace was in favor—and if so, at what price—of "a full government program for radical economic recovery" and "democratization of political life." The first goal would presumably be attained through "the second stage of economic reforms"—that is to say, the implementation of policies ratified in 1982 and then left on the vine. As for the political program, it was to mark a quantum leap from palliative measures devoid of constitutional and legal guarantees to full-fledged structural and institutional changes.*

Again, the euphoria—such as it was—proved short-lived. In the months following the referendum (November 1987), the government made it possible for Polish citizens (with some salient exceptions, such as prominent Solidarity leaders) to travel abroad and for former Polish citizens (including Jews who had left the country after the anti-Semitic orgy of 1967–68) to visit their one-time homeland. Censorship was further relaxed to the point that virtually no area seemed sacrosanct, except such touchy subjects as certain aspects of Polish-Soviet relations. Work proceeded on the draft of a new bill that would legalize even outright political clubs; and although some organizations dissolved during the martial law period, such as the Polish PEN Club, were still in limbo, new ones were allowed to register. (The PEN Club was legalized in August 1988).

Yet there was no sign of steps aiming—in the words of the referendum—at "strengthening self-government, extending the rights of citizens and increasing their participation" in running the country. "Union pluralism," which is to say the reinstatement of Solidarity, had been expressly sanctioned by law. But it remained subject to an indefinite postponement decreed in 1984 by the Council of State (Poland's collective presidency). Indeed, even the most "proreformist" or "liberal" members of the Establishment, such as party secretary Stanislaw Ciosek, whom I interviewed in December 1987 and again in July 1988, would bristle at the very mention of the word Solidarity. More ominously, the new law on elections to the "people's councils," while allowing for multiple candidacies, was so worded as to ensure their control by the local

* For details, see my "A New Deal in Poland?" and "Poland: The New Opposition," *New York Review of Books*, January 15, 1987 and February 18, 1988.

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party *apparat*—which is precisely what happened when the Poles voted in spring 1987.

If there was one single area that could no longer be tackled by the usual mix of hand-wringing, pious assurances, and bogus palliatives, it was surely the state of the country's economy. Decapitalization, inflationary spirals, lack of elementary consumer goods, medicines, food, and housing (the average waiting period for apartments is thirty years), an abysmally low rate of productivity (why work if money is virtually worthless?), more than twelve million people living on a below-subsistence level, ecological blights among the worst in Europe, and a public that could cope only by moonlighting, bribery, black-marketeering, or the occasional job stint in Chicago or Stockholm—all this had turned Poland into a prime example of the idiocies wrought by a "command administrative" economy and a *nomenklatura* furiously clinging to power and privileges. Romania, of course, is worse. But Romania has a history of popular passivity only occasionally punctured by a bloody jacquerie. Poles, however prone to wishful thinking, are not known for straining forever at the leash. Could another explosion be far away?

The ruling party elite has been fully aware of the magnitude of the country's economic catastrophe and of the danger of yet another outburst of discontent. So have its leading economists. Poland is the birthplace of a number of gifted economic theorists (Oscar Lange, Michal Kalecki, and Woldzimierz Brus, among others) who had repeatedly tried to impress the political leadership with the need to abandon the system of centralized control in favor of a mixed—or "socialist market"—economy. Just as repeatedly, their efforts (particularly in 1957–58 and 1964–65) had been thwarted by an *apparat* fearful of the political price it would have to pay for the reforms.*

Kalecki and Lange are dead, Brus (a victim of the 1967–68 witch-hunt) is at Oxford, but others, equally gifted, have taken their place. Over the past few years, and especially since spring 1987, when the government unveiled its draft of the "second stage" for public discussion, the press has been flooded with articles about the urgent need to overhaul the country's economic structure. The government's plans and dismal performance record have been criticized from various points of view, and counterproposals have run from advocacy of unrestrained laissez-faire to a far more radical blend of market mechanisms, private entrepreneurship, and government planning.**

Whatever the differences among them, nearly all economists agree on measures aimed at encouraging the growth of the private sector, establishing profitability as the criterion of an enterprise's survival, sharply reducing the crippling taxes on both private and state enterprises, and providing more freedom for enterprise directors so as to make them less dependent on ministry orders. Above all, the economists have urged a thorough decentralization of the economic apparatus and a fundamen-

* Other countries in the East European bloc have also produced their share of brilliant economists, whose advice—unlike the Poles'—had not gone altogether unheeded. Kadar, despite fierce party and *apparat* resistance, felt secure enough in Hungary to force through rudimentary reforms in the early 1970s, thus laying the groundwork for more radical changes. In Dubcek's Czechoslovakia, the party itself became infected with the virus of reform and therefore receptive to the ideas of economists like Ota Sik. In Poland, however, each successive ruling elite has been hounded by an awareness of its lack of legitimacy. The fears generated by this weakness and augmented by the trauma of 1980–81 linger on to this day.

** *Pace* the British writer Timothy Garton Ash, hardly any bona fide economist champions a "Thatcherite" model of a market economy. To be sure, Thatcher has been rhapsodized by some party leaders, such as premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski, who said upon her arrival in Poland last October that he would be "proud to be a pupil in Mrs. Thatcher's class"—this only a few days before the British visitor called for the legalization of Solidarity. Similarly, Thatcher has earned the praise of the odd political journalist of the "conservative-liberal" persuasion (Poland's version of our neoconservatives), hostile to "socialism" in any shape or form and impressed with the way the British prime minister has handled her country's trade unions. Though the term "socialist market economy" is no longer in vogue, by far the largest number of economists advocate some form of a mixed economy. (An article on this subject by the Polish economist Ryszard Bugaj will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Dissent*—*Eds.*)

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tal change in the investment policy, with a shift of emphasis from heavy industry to consumer goods, housing, and agriculture. To accomplish the latter, the government must emasculate the so-called "energy, coal, and steel lobby" (or, in Khrushchev's memorable phrase, the "metal eaters")—the vast and powerful bureaucracy supervising industries (many of them unprofitable) that have claimed the lion's share of the country's investments.*

Just as important as some of these remedies, however, is the principle—firmly advocated by nearly all the government's critics—of linking economic with political reforms. No "technological" solutions, however appropriate, can work in a country whose ruling elite enjoys so little public support, and where a growing number of citizens crave a voice in shaping their future. (Recent polls conducted by the official Center for the Study of Public Opinion [CBOS] indicate that most Polish citizens favor a mechanism that would effectively check government policies.) The economic measures proposed would impose considerable hardships on an already hard-pressed population: temporary unemployment once workers are dismissed from unprofitable enterprises and higher prices inevitable once pricing is determined by supply and demand. They can succeed only if they enjoy a measure of public trust and confidence. That in turn requires political pluralism and participation in the decision-making process both on the local and national levels.

In the area of political changes, opinions have also differed. But nearly everyone concurs on the essentials: first, freedom to advocate alternative views and policies—that is, no more foot-dragging on the much discussed "law on associations," lifting the ban on independent student organizations, and restoring university autonomy, severely curtailed in 1986; second, an end to the party's monopoly of power—specifically, depriving it of its control over factory workers' councils, "people's councils," and the Sejm; and third, a drastic change in the notorious *nomenklatura* system, which has clogged the prospects for advancement in major areas of public life to anyone except the party faithful, and which has been one of the principal causes (along with the housing scourge) for the massive exodus of young people from Poland.

With the exception of some underground radical groups, no one—certainly none of the leading economists—has questioned the special (or "leading") role of the Communist party as the only political force acceptable to the "socialist camp" (read Moscow). Unless, however, the party is shorn of some of its power and agrees to share power with other social groups, Poland will remain mired in its protracted economic and political crisis.

I have already mentioned the regime's failure to honor its promise of democratizing local elections. Nor did it seem to recognize the psychological need to proceed decisively with the "law on associations." But nowhere was its behavior more clumsy and calamitous than in connection with the "radical economic recovery." Despite the six-month hoopla about "public discussion" and despite its promise to abide by the results of the referendum, the regime decided to shape its economic policies without even paying attention to the advice and dire warnings of its "own" Consultative Economic Council, the official trade union federation (OPZZ), and the economists grouped around the official weekly, *Zycie Gospodarcze (Economic Life)*.

Forgotten were the admonitions about linking economic reforms with greater political pluralism. Forgotten were the lessons of

* Though the term "coal, energy and steel lobby" is widely used both by East European and Western economists, some of the latter reject it as a sociological entity. Instead, they point to the natural tendency of an import-oriented economy—rather than one emphasizing export and hard currency earnings—to secure input into heavy production at the expense of consumer goods. (See B. Kaminski, "Economic Reform and Directive Capacity," paper presented at international conference, New Dimensions of Poland's Economy," Wichita State Univ., Kansas, Oct. 1987).) In this version, the bureaucrats in charge of those industries are seen as creatures of the system, rather than as an independent group protecting its own institutional interests. The two theories, it seems to me, are not mutually exclusive: The second helps to explain the origins and rise of a powerful bureaucracy. The "sociological" theory, on the other hand, explains the bureaucracy's obstinate resistance to any reforms that threaten to undermine its position in the communist power structure.

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history, which demonstrated (in 1970, in 1976, and most dramatically in 1980) that price increases are no substitute for genuine systemic reforms. Instead, the government launched a precipitous "wage and price" policy aimed at freezing wages and imposing drastic increases on the price of food, consumer goods, and energy (coal and electricity)—all striking at the most dispossessed parts of the population. Luxury and capital goods were let off scot-free. The bureaucrats remained at their desks. There was no perceptible change in investment, and unproductive plants and factories continued to poison the air even as they went bankrupt.

The results were (or should have been) predictable. Expectations raised by the referendum gave way to loud grumbling. In May 1988 several thousand workers in the Gdansk shipyard, birthplace of Solidarity, and other plants throughout the country laid down their tools, and for a while it seemed as if another major industrial upheaval—the first since 1980—was in the offing.

As it happened, the strikes were over in less than three weeks, and the government heaved a sigh of relief. After all, only a fraction of the working force had joined in the walkouts. Traditional sources of industrial strife, such as the huge Ursus steel plant in Warsaw, remained passive, and the public at large registered little sympathy for the strikers.

Moreover, strikers' demands centered on higher pay and improved working conditions, while the occasional political cries, especially for the reinstatement of Solidarity, fell largely on deaf ears. In fact the Solidarity leaders, caught by surprise, had no cause to rejoice. As the last contingent of young workers left the Gdansk shipyard, Walesa bravely intoned the old slogan: "There is no freedom without Solidarity." To which his wife, Danuta, standing at his side, added gloomily: "There is no Solidarity."

The relief proved ephemeral. Some of the strikers won hefty wage increases ranging from 50 to 63 percent, almost immediately nullified by equally hefty increases in the prices of food and services. Others quit in weary despair, and in the steel plant of Nowa Huta the authorities had to call out the detested ZOMO (riot police)—not exactly the language of "dialogue" and "national understanding."

For several weeks an uneasy calm prevailed. Despite official mea culpas, no perceptible measures replaced the now abandoned "wage and price" policy. Discontent kept growing. The storm broke in August, with another wave of industrial unrest. But this time there were two differences: During the weeks that followed, as many as thirty thousand workers were out on strike. And unlike three months earlier, the reinstatement of Solidarity was a major demand. Young workers in their early twenties, few of them with any real memory of the 1980–81 period, walked out, but this time the old leaders came forward right away, offering their skills and experience. Walesa, less vacillating and uncertain than he had been back in May, quickly became the recognized spokesman of the new opposition.

The government, clearly astonished by this turn of events, caved in. With the demand for the relegalization of Solidarity now being embraced not only by an increasing number of workers, but also by oppositionist intellectuals, many of them heretofore cool to the notion of "union pluralism," the authorities announced in late August that they were ready to enter into direct "round table discussions" with the political opposition, including Lech Walesa. Walesa replied that he was always in favor of dialogue, but (this under pressure from the young workers) only on the condition of full reinstatement of Solidarity. The government offered no guarantees, but hinted that this subject, too, was open to discussion. In the meantime, would Mr. Walesa (until recently described in the party press as a "private person representing no one but himself," but now a subject of several interviews in the open press) use his authority to persuade the strikers in the remaining five plants (out of the original seventeen) to go back to work?

Walesa agreed, but only if General Kiszczak, the minister of interior, would see to it that those strikers who had been dismissed from employment or threatened with induction into the armed forces were reinstated and that the charges against them dropped. General Kiszczak said he would do what he could, and Walesa began to shuttle back and forth from

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one factory to another pleading with the workers to call off their walkouts.

It was not an easy job, what with some of the workers suspicious of Walesa's ostensible penchant for "rotten compromises," but in the end he won out, and Solidarity met with the general to discuss the timetable, composition, and agenda of the forthcoming talks. All of which helps to explain the air of expectation that I found upon arriving in Warsaw in early September.

What explains Solidarity's spectacular second coming? How real is it and what does it bode for the future? And why did Jaruzelski's regime, which for years had spared no effort to destroy and defame Solidarity, suddenly decide to recognize it as a negotiating partner?

That Solidarity is back in vogue is undeniable. "Back" because it is just as undeniable that over the past few years its size and popularity had drastically declined. Three years ago, Solidarity claimed a dues-paying membership of one million. After 1986 membership figures became unavailable. In fact, until the most recent events, one could hardly speak of Solidarity as a single definable organization. With a dwindling working-class following, it was reduced to clusters of erstwhile activists, as well as a number of intellectual advisers, many of them suspected by the former of harboring personal political ambitions.

Although Solidarity was still organized regionally and nationally (with a National Executive Commission occasionally meeting semi-legally), activities of the local bodies were uncoordinated and sometimes even at loggerheads with one other. About the one activity that Solidarity could be rightly proud of was its underground press, yet here too competing underground groups, some of them sympathetic but some hostile to Solidarity, could claim as much if not more support.

There were many reasons for this somber state of affairs, including the natural erosion of élan due to fatigue, disappointment, the growing indifference to any form of political activism, and personal feuds and disagreements about strategy and unproductive but time-consuming tactics. The new officially sanctioned trade union federation, now seven million strong, claimed, often effectively, to have inherited the "true" mantle of the Solidarity of late 1980 and early 1981—before it presumably changed from a bona fide trade union to (as the official media tirelessly proclaimed) an "antisocialist" political force manipulated by "political adventurers" and intellectuals indifferent to the real aspirations of Polish workers.

The relentless campaign proved effective. (Nearly every worker or cab driver I have talked to over the past few years, however contemptuous of the regime, said that Solidarity had needlessly antagonized the Polish authorities and its "eastern neighbor." "They shouldn't have tried to grab everything at once," was the common refrain.) And selective quotations from the spate of self-critical writings published in the underground press over the past few years seemed to offer proof of Solidarity's "political bankruptcy." Its own leaders admitted that the movement had grievously erred by escalating its demands, falling prey to its myth of invincibility, refusing to negotiate in good faith with the party reformers, and frequently letting hotheads and "fundamentalists" dictate its strategy and tactics?

The notion that Solidarity still represents not only the opposition, but society at large, has alienated many of its own supporters and independent intellectuals. In May 1988, for instance, the journal *Res Publica* (Warsaw) carried two responses to the editors' question, "What place will the opposition occupy on the Polish political arena three years hence?".*

* *Res Publica* was the first journal founded in 1986 under private, that is to say neither church nor state auspices. Its "independent" status does not exempt it from official censorship, which since 1983 allows every publication to note each excised passage, and to bring the censorship decisions to court. Over the past two years, the courts have often upheld such appeals. I don't know whether *Res Publica,* whose contributors include many Catholic intellectuals, has consistently exercised its right to bypass church censorship, in no way less rigorous than that of the state. In December 1987, I asked the venerable editor of the Krakow weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny,* Jerzy Turowicz, why he had failed to publish a letter by about forty prominent intellectuals protesting Cardinal Glemp's silence on a Warsaw parish bookstore selling vile anti-Semitic

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Both were revealing less for their general views than for the terms in which they were couched.

One reply came from Bronislaw Geremek, a distinguished historian, one of Solidarity's principal advisers and now its unofficial *chef de cabinet*. He presented a closely reasoned case for the gradual "institutionalization of economic and social pluralism, accompanied by a significant (if temporary) abjurement of political pluralism." The "abjurement" is to be exercised by something called "the Polish civil society"—a vague and undifferentiated entity repeatedly conjured up by the author: "from the point of view of the society"; "the interest of society"; "the aspirations of society"; "the society's participation in public life" (this last something of a tautology), and so on.

The second contribution, by Stanislaw Stomma, a lawyer and leading lay Catholic figure, is just as critical of the regime as Geremek and more optimistic about the long-range prospects of democratization. Unlike Geremek, however, Stomma does not spare the opposition. The "ideology" of the ruling elite, he says, finds its mirror image in the "traditional routine of the opposition," which clings to an obsolete view of the international order and to a vision of Poland divided between two distinct camps—"the rulers and the ruled." This simplistic attitude, he observes, fails to take into account the important differences between the reformists and hard-liners within the party, as well as the "complex nature of the opposition". The habit of "speaking of 'the societys' opposition and the attempt to reduce [many] tendencies to one common denominator," he writes, is grounded in "weak political thinking" and

> in post-insurrectionary traditions and motivations [such as] the preservation of national identity, which after all has lost any sense in the light of the conspicuous social and ideological changes [in Poland]. Despite everything, this argument enjoys popularity, and any attempt to question it evokes spirited anathemas.*

Geremek's essay (and Stomma's de facto rejoinder) is but one illustration of many. The tendency to portray Solidarity as the representative of "society" writ large has also been accompanied by sweeping denunciations of the authorities and by demands—such as the full relegalization of the union as the sine qua non for any negotiations with the regime—that invited charges of hyperbole, lack of realism, and intransigence. To Daniel Passent—recognized even by his foes as one of Poland's most accomplished journalists—such "voices do not testify to the ostensible readiness to enter into a dialogue, to make concessions and compromises." Even the eminent historian Jerzy Holzer, author of a highly sympathetic work on Solidarity (published by an underground press in 1984), chided its leaders in an interview published in the September 1988 issue of the official monthly *Konfrontacje*. He criticized their "senseless" demands and their pursuit of a course patently designed to offend and embarrass the regime, rather than to draw it into a meaningful discourse.

By the time I arrived in Poland in September, the widespread misgivings about the wisdom of insisting on Solidarity's immediate reinstatement had disappeared into thin air. The eminent economist Jan Mujzel, a consistent proponent of drastic economic cum political reforms who in the past (judging from my conversation with him two years ago) had not wanted to make Solidarity's legalization the centerpiece of the reforms, now told me that without recognizing Solidarity "the regime—and the country—will go down the drain." Similar sentiments (though in characteristically calm language) now came from Stanislaw Stomma, as well as from Alexander Hall,

tracts, such as "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." "Come now, Mr. Brumberg," he replied, "you know better than to expect me to publish any criticism of the Primate." The magnitude and character of the censorship imposed by the church on publications under its control cry out for analysis, especially in the light of the church's much vaunted "moral authority," and its impassioned defense of freedom of expression. Privately, many Catholic intellectuals deplore it, but thus far no one has seen fit to broach this delicate subject.

* The author refers to the predominance of romantically nationalistic views that emerged in Poland in the wake of the uprisings of 1830 and 1863.

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leader of a "sanitized" pro-"Endek" group* and once a severe if sympathetic critic of Solidarity. They were voiced by some of Solidarity's "moderates," as well as by non-Solidarity moderates such as the editor of *Res Publica,* Marcin Krol. The need for a "political settlement" now overshadowed all other concerns. And a political settlement was predicated, in turn, on solving the problem of workers' participation and representation. As Ryszard Bugaj, an adviser to Solidarity and a quintessential moderate, was to write several weeks later:

> Trade union pluralism should be accepted, first because it constitutes an indispensable institutional framework for resolving labor conflicts; . . . Second, [because] it is impossible to reconcile different interests in a coalitionist structure by excluding the representatives of most employees, especially of industrial workers . . . Third, trade union pluralism and the legalization of Solidarity is at one and the same time a matter of the credibility of the ruling camp and a major opportunity to assuage the emotions bequeathed by the events of December 13, 1981 [the day when martial law was proclaimed in Poland]. It is safe to assume that it is precisely this step that is likely to exert a positive influence on the social climate in Poland as well as on foreign opinion vis-à-vis Poland.**

On September 11, Solidarity's National Executive Commission met in joint session with representatives of several union chapters and about eighty prominent intellectuals and issued a statement demanding the immediate reinstatement of the union. The irrepressible Jacek Kuron told me he was ready to wager that Solidarity would "again function as a legal organization" within three or at most six months. An editor of the underground weekly *Mazowsze* described the results of a poll among Solidarity activists: The organization was now enjoying a "remarkable surge of popularity." I attended a meeting of the newly founded Solidarity chapter at the Ursus plant (dormant both in May and in August), where workers discussed matter-of-factly how to get more members. And Professor Geremek, in the past attacked by Solidarity's radicals (he wanted a dialogue with the regime) and also by the regime (he insisted on the relegalization of Solidarity), now felt vindicated, if not euphoric. It was he, after all, who in February had been the first to propose an "anticrisis" pact between the opposition and the régime. The idea, occasionally under the sobriquet of "a proreformist coalition," now seemed to be accepted by many of his critics on both sides of the divide.

Not only within Solidarity and oppositionist circles, but also in the Sejm, a new spirit of defiance was on the rise. According to one of the most outspoken deputies, Professor Mikolaj Kozakiewicz, many deputies were no longer willing to tolerate a situation where the party controlled 53 percent of the seats and could thus "railroad through any law" without paying heed to criticism. A "new political arrangement" must be concluded: the party would still retain its "leading role" in the government, but would dispose of less than half of the parliamentary seats. "To this day," he observed, "every prime minister must get the party's imprimatur for any bill he wants to present to the Sejm. A new arrangement will make the government responsible not to the party, but to the freely elected representatives of the public." This will entail, of course, a new electoral law. In other words—a major if long-postponed inroad into the party's monopoly of power.***

The new optimism stemmed first and above all, of course, from the pro-Solidarity slogans raised during the August strikes. It was fed by the remarkable *volte face* of the regime, which had just announced its readiness to sit down at the negotiating table with the opposition,

* "Endek"—from the first initials of the pre-war National Democrats, a virulently antisemitic and chauvinistic movement, part of whose legacy (minus the antisemitism) has been embraced by various groups in Poland, including Hall's "Young Poland Movement," later reincarnated under the title "Club of Political Thought *Dziekania.*"

** "The Shape and Conditions of Poland's Restructuring," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Krakow, November 13, 1988. The article was datelined "October 1988."

*** At the present time, two satellite political groups, the Democratic and Peasant parties, are represented in the Sejm and can always be counted on to back the ruling Polish United Workers (that is, Communist) party. Other seats are apportioned to other organizations, nearly all of them equally servile. If, say, 60 percent of the deputies were chosen in free elections, ad hoc coalitions might well be formed, likely to include disaffected Democratic and Peasant deputies.

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including Walesa. I asked Party Secretary Ciosek whether this meant that the regime was at long last willing to recognize Solidarity. "The very fact that we're prepared to sit with them at the table speaks for itself," he replied. Another Politburo member, Jozef Czyrek, at first balked at my probing about legalizing Solidarity. "Look at these slogans," he said, showing me the text of demands raised at a recently concluded "workers' pilgrimage" to the holy site of Czestochowa: "Down with the red bourgeoisie!"; "We will smash the *komuna*!" "But surely Walesa," I countered, "never uses such language." "He was present at the pilgrimage," Czyrek angrily replied, "wasn't he? And he didn't denounce these slogans. Let Solidarity clean up its act," he added in a more conciliatory voice, "and we shall talk to them about reinstatement."

I write these lines two months after the events. Since my last visit, the situation has again deteriorated and the earlier mood has given way—predictably—to skepticism, anger, and gloom. As of now, the "round table discussions" have been suspended, even though both sides insist they want them. In September, the Sejm was the scene of an unprecedented spectacle: The government of Zbigniew Meissner tendered its resignation after listening to scathing criticism by nonparty and party deputies alike.

A month later, a new government came into being. Its head, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, is known as much for his reformist itch as for his hostility to Solidarity. He delivered a speech promising decisive measures in the areas of agriculture, food production, consumer goods industries, ecology, and housing. His new team included a genuine Polish millionaire, Mieczyslaw Wilczek, who assured the Sejm that as minister of heavy industry he would spare no efforts to phase out deficit enterprises, provide incentives to private initiative, eliminate crippling taxes, and encourage joint ventures with the West. As for trade unions, he observed blithely that in principle he was not against them, but that in his experience a well-functioning enterprise could easily do without them.

Rakowski's assurances that he could "solve" Poland's problems by his tough economic policies were welcomed by party hard-liners, always opposed to any negotiations with the opposition, as well as by the leadership *in toto,* clearly discomfited by the prospects of having to give in to Solidarity's now widely supported demands and to risk the eclipse of the official union federation.

According to many people in Poland, the "round table discussions" broke down because of Rakowski's enmity towards Solidarity. On October 30, the government suddenly announced that it was going to close the Gdansk shipyard. The shipyard—like many shipyards in many countries—has been grossly unprofitable. Yet the timing of the announcement, and the choice of precisely that enterprise (among the 150 targeted by Rakowski for closure), could only be seen as a deliberate provocation. (The more so since Wilczek had said just days earlier that although he wasn't sure whether the shipyard would be slated for the axe, a decision on this matter would in any case be "free of political accents").

A few days later, the government declared that it was hoping to initiate the talks as quickly as possible, but with a Solidarity delegation that no longer included Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik, both men ostensibly opposed to Poland's "constitutional order." Statements demonstrating Michnik's and Kuron's abiding hostility to the communist system were promptly dug up. But again, the objection only fueled growing suspicion that the authorities were seeking a pretext for aborting the talks. In a country like Poland, where "*sprawy honorowe*" (matters of honor) count at least as much as political realities, it was inevitable that Walesa (this despite Michnik's and Kuron's request that their candidacies be withdrawn) would dig in his heels, as he also did about the Gdansk shipyard.

What followed was the usual muddle: The government, apparently taken aback by the reaction to its decision to close the shipyard (though God alone knows why it should have been), announced that the process would take two years and that all the workers would be assured of new jobs. Walesa first said he would call for a strike and then reversed himself.

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Alfred Miodowicz, head of the official trade union federation (and member of the Politburo), challenged Walesa to a televised debate about the desirable shape of "union pluralism" (not surprisingly, Miodowicz thinks you can have plenty of it even with only one union). The debate was aired live on Polish television on November 30.

What next? By the time this article reaches the reader, the "round-table talks" may have started—or they may not. Walesa may prove inflexible on the matter of Solidarity's reinstatement, if only because he is hostage to the militant young workers who are likely to disown him if he "capitulates."* Or it may be diluted by a regime that clearly is not keen on resurrecting the ghosts of 1980–81—this despite Solidarity's assurance that it would relinquish any political ambitions.

There are other possibilities. "Moderate" support for Walesa may wane once the law on associations comes into being and if the party agrees to a power-sharing arrangement in the Sejm. (Already several political clubs, one of them pledged to the principles of the prewar Christian Democratic party, have come into being.) On the other hand, the creation of genuine political space for a "loyal opposition" strong enough to shape legislation yet recognizing the party's control over areas such as foreign policy and defense might well minimize the chance that Solidarity will turn once again into a massive political movement. Whether Jaruzelski et al. agree remains to be seen.

If the stalemate persists, the stage may be set for another explosion; or the atmosphere of weariness, indifference, and political passivity may once more prevail (if only temporarily). After all, opinion polls still indicate that the vast majority of Poland's citizens have little use for either the government or its political opponents. Walesa himself admitted in an interview (*Konfrontacje,* September 1988) that "at least 60 percent of the Poles couldn't care a damn about Solidarity—what they want is a better life." And public opinion polls have shown that the public's revulsion against the authorities does not necessarily translate into support for the political opposition. After the August strikes, however, public support for Solidrity went up by a few percentage points.

Each of these scenarios raises new questions. What guarantees can Solidarity offer that its reinstatement would lead to a "better life," or a decline of social discontent? The old Solidarity leadership cannot claim to control the militant young workers; won't the next generation prove even more independent-minded? The economic situation is desperate, and few economists believe that it can be turned around in less than ten years. Will the existence of a legal opposition—if one comes about—make the necessary sacrifices any more palatable or acceptable to the public? If not, won't the opposition inevitably find itself sharing not only power, but the odium that power brings in Poland?

None of the scenarios promises instant cure. And since instant cure is not in the offing, each of them is likely to produce more hope and disenchantment. Which is to say that the Polish see-saw may be expected to go on swinging—down, up, and down again. □

* According to a survey conducted by Jerzy Wertenstein-Zulawski and several of his colleagues from the Polish Sociological Association (as related to me by Zulawski), the young workers who sparked the strikes last spring and who remain the single most important catalyst of possible new upheavals do not necessarily enjoy the support of their older colleagues, especially skilled workers and foremen. Their image of Solidarity is not drawn from the experience of 1980–81. Rather, it is an expression of seething anger, frustration, and a craving for a body that would represent their interests, and would not be manipulated by any "politicians." In August, they gladly accepted the help from seasoned activists, but they remain suspicious of Solidarity's intellectual advisers, and their support of Walesa is predicated on whether he "delivers" on his promise not to negotiate unless the authorities agree to Solidarity's reinstatement.

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Michael Harrington

MARKETS AND PLANS

Is the Market Necessarily Capitalist?

China, one has been told since Deng Xiaoping's market-oriented reforms began in the late 1970s, is becoming capitalist. So is the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, similarly with Hungary, Angola, Vietnam, and all the other economies that were once centrally planned and have now introduced markets to achieve efficient production.

If this were simply one more example of a superficial journalistic dichotomy—either a society is planned and socialist or relies on markets and is capitalist—it would not be too bothersome. But it goes beyond that. Serious scholars employ this facile distinction. And there are not a few socialists who believe that tolerating markets may be a political necessity but still somehow represents a surrender of rectitude, compromising the basic vision.

The fact is that we cannot evaluate, or even describe, the workings of markets independently of the social structure in which they operate. The "free choice" of goods, jobs, or investments is one thing in a laissez-faire economy of extreme inequality; another in a monopoly or oligopoly system; still another in a democratic welfare state; and quite different in a communist dictatorship. And, under conditions that must be carefully specified, free choice—without quotation marks—would have a completely new, and potentially positive, significance in any foreseeable transition to a socialist society. Generalizations about the meanings of markets in the abstract are, then, all suspect.

In a sense, the superficial dichotomy of plan and market, an abstraction par excellence, is the heir—usually unwitting—of a central tradition in capitalist thought. In that perspective, there is an economic "human nature" that exists throughout history even if it is imperfectly developed in precapitalist societies. The stone tool of paleolithic humanity is an embryonic form of capital, the precursor of an automated factory. And a market is a market is a market. Thus the announcement of "the emergence of capitalism" in China or the Soviet Union is made triumphantly as a proof that the eternal verities have again prevailed.

The point is not just to make a critique of a bad theory. It is to understand the very different relations between planning and markets in various societies and to free the socialism of tomorrow from the assumption that a market in a social order of increasing equality and popular democratic control is somehow as reprehensible as a market that functions to provide shacks for the poor and mansions for the rich.

Let me put my point paradoxically: Only under socialism and democratic planning will it be possible for markets to serve the common good as Adam Smith thought they did under capitalism.

I am not proposing that the new socialism project a market utopia. Far from it. In the advanced welfare states socialists have already removed critical areas of life from the market economy. In every one of them, save the United States, basic health care is collectively financed and provided without reference to income—and that process will, and should, continue. And the actual functioning of some of the most important contemporary markets—the capitalist world market that integrates North and South, for instance—are viciously and completely at odds with the virtues still

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imputed to them. I insist that, in the dimly foreseeable and utterly international future of, say, the next fifty years, markets can be an important instrument of free choice rather than of perverse maldistribution if they are reorganized within a socialist context.

Ambivalence in the Marxist Tradition

It may seem strange that I begin an analysis of current and future markets by going back to Marx. But, as Keynes said, the pragmatic, no-nonsense proponents of the simplistic plan/market dichotomy often repeat abstractions that are more than a century old. Marx, I am afraid, is a major source of the contemporary confusion, not the least because he provides solid authority for contradictory positions. Even more to the point, a careful reading of *Das Kapital* yields, of all things, a Marxist methodology capable of grasping the positive potential of markets even as that book brilliantly denounces their functioning under laissez-faire.

At first glance there seems to be no ambiguity. It is, one would think, painfully obvious that Marx equated markets with capitalism and socialism with their abolition. The opening chapter of *Das Kapital* defines the "commodity" as the very basis of the capitalist system. And the commodity is, of course, not simply a useful good or service but a useful good or service that is produced to be sold on a market at a profit. Commodities, Marx argued, have existed ever since human beings, in the mists of time, went beyond subsistence production and began to make things to exchange with one another. But it is only with the rise of capitalism that commodity production—market production—becomes the dominant activity of an entire society. Isn't it inescapably clear, then, that the system is defined by markets?

Those markets, Marx continues, are pernicious. Where people produced for their own needs—in families, tribes or self-contained communities—there was misery as a result of the low level of economic development and periodic hunger and famine when the harvest failed or the fishing gave out. But there were not such things as overproduction and underproduction, no economic breakdown that occurred because there was "too much" to be sold at a profit. It was only with the dominance of commodity production that poverty resulted from glut. At the same time that this market process regularly plunged masses into a social abyss, it enormously increased the wealth of the successful rich. Markets were, Marx held, engines of social inequality, reproducing elite domination as well as physical products.

So far, the attack on the market is straightforward and principled. But then, when he turns to his central theory of exploitation, Marx becomes more complex. In the calculated oversimplification of his basic analysis, which generations have mistaken for a flawed description of the real world, it was assumed that raw materials, machines, and finance were all exchanged according to their value and that sellers charged buyers a fair price. Where, then, was the source of profit? In the labor market. The workers sold their labor power like any other commodity. In theory, the resulting wage was the outcome of a bargain between equals, each of whom was "free" to deal with the other. In reality, this was a deal between unequals: between a wealthy buyer and a precarious seller trying to keep body and soul together. The content of the market agreement was, then, determined, not by markets per se but by the social conditions under which the markets operated.

So labor markets under capitalism, based on economic rather than political coercion, forced workers to "freely" sell their labor power at a fair value that produced more for the capitalist than it cost. But that opened up the possibility that, if one changed the circumstances under which the wage bargain was made, the market outcomes would be different. And in an analysis of a historic event of enormous importance for his theory, Marx went on to show that that eventuality had taken place.

The discussion of the Ten-Hours law, which legally limited the working day in Britain, occupies a central place in Volume I of *Kapital* because it was the basis of a crucial distinction between "absolute" and "relative" surplus value. If one assumes that the worker produces enough to "pay back" his or her wage during only a portion of the working day, then an obvious way to increase profits is to extend that

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working day. That was the first capitalist strategy. As a result of this savage process, "every limit of morality and nature, of age and gender, of day and night, was destroyed." This was the drive for "absolute" surplus value.

But then, continues Marx, a number of things happened. The physical brutalization of the working class literally threatened its biological existence and thereby the future of the system itself. The landlords, still furious with the industrial capitalists for having abolished agricultural protectionism in order to cheapen the price of bread and thereby the subsistence wage, were willing to make common cause with the reformers and the workers and to join in a campaign to put a limit on the working day. The official economists predicted, of course, that such a move would destroy capitalism. In fact, Marx argued, it forced capital to seek more profits by increasing productivity, by working labor intelligently rather than working it to death. And one of the consequences of this political struggle was that capitalism now oriented itself toward "relative" surplus value, toward getting more out of each hour of work rather than simply extending the hours. This was one of the many reasons why it was superior—economically and even morally—to the brutal exploitation of the past.

What is relevant here is that Marx regarded the Ten-Hours Law—only a minimal humanization of the laissez-faire labor market—as nothing less than a "modest Magna Carta," as "the triumph of the political economy of the working class over the political economy of the middle class." A merely reformist change in the structure of the labor market could profoundly affect the very meaning of the market economy and even give rise to a new epoch in the history of capitalism. These texts provide clear warrant for the notion that, under the radically changed circumstances of a socialist-tending society, markets would have an utterly different meaning than under capitalist laissez-faire. Unfortunately, *Das Kapital* also provides solid reasons for arguing a contrary proposition: that socialism must totally dispense with markets. Small wonder that matters get confused.

Ironically, Marx gets into this contradiction in the process of once again making the point that markets do not have a fixed, immutable content. Indeed, under capitalism they inexorably tend to turn into their opposite: It is the "historic tendency" of competition to culminate in monopoly. At that point, Marx argued, the pursuit of private profit no longer motivates the capitalist to act as the greedy agent of progress by constantly revolutionizing the productivity of the entire society. Now, monopolists "fetter" production precisely because they can dictate to markets and are therefore no longer subjected to the discipline of efficiency. As the system falters, the working class, which needs more productivity in order to raise its own living standard, becomes the economically dynamic class.

This means many things. What is particularly relevant here is that socialism is defined as a monopoly—a democratic, socially conscious monopoly, but a monopoly nevertheless, a system without effective markets. As Radoslov Selucky, who brilliantly understands this contradiction, has put it, in this context "Marx's economic concept of socialism consists of a single social-wide factory based on vertical [hierarchical] relations of superiority and subordination. . . ." This is the planned, market-less society with a vengeance. But at the very same time, Marx's "political concept of socialism consists of a free association of self-managed work and social communities based on horizontal relations of equality. Whoever accepts in full Marx's first concept has to give up the latter, and vice versa: they are mutually exclusive."

In short, even though Marx in one persona clearly rejected markets altogether, his methodology allows room for the assumption that the markets of a socialist future need not be anything like the markets of the capitalist past. And, much more important, his basic political values, his commitment to freedom and human emancipation, are simply at odds with the consequences that follow from his own analysis of socialism as a centrally planned society or a progressive monopoly. When Karl Kautsky concluded that in the good society workers would not have the right to change their jobs at will—because there would be no labor markets—he had solid grounding in Marx at the same time as he was contradicting the latter's

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vision of a truly free and communitarian association of the direct producers.

Piety about an ambiguous tradition should not, then, keep socialists from seeing that markets can, and must, play a role in the transition to a humane future. All one needs to do is to choose the libertarian Marx over the centralist Marx and then confront reality instead of texts.

How the Bolsheviks Coped, or Didn't

The first socialists to confront reality, in the sense of actually taking responsibility for the organization of an entire economy, were the Bolsheviks. And their experience, as the Soviet rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin in the 1980s testifies, is relevant to the present and future.*

Indeed, the thesis that any reliance on markets is a sure sign of capitalism, so popular in the eighties with regard to China and the Soviet Union, first surfaced in the 1920s under Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). The antisocialist press gleefully reported that the Soviets were making the transition from communism to capitalism because they had turned to market forces, a judgment that proved to be spectacularly wrong and about as substantial then as it is now.

Bukharin was a champion of "socialism at a snail's pace," which would make use of market incentives. But Trotsky, who was then Bukharin's principle antagonist and the chief defender of "planning" as against "markets," also recognized that the latter had a critical role to play throughout the entire period of transition. Trotsky was ultimately committed to the vision of a planned society that would dispense with markets; but he was equally emphatic that, on the road to that final goal, it was necessary to have a sound currency to measure the market value of investment costs and consumer goods. Stalinist planning—a command economy operated bureaucratically from a single center—was, he rightly thought, a political and economic disaster.

But before turning to Trotsky's advocacy of markets, two of Bukharin's particularly illuminating insights in this area are worth remembering.

In a 1924 polemic, Bukharin raised the problem of the "tendency toward monopoly" in Soviet society. That, he said, could indeed allow the state to get an extra profit without any effort at all. "But isn't the result of that the danger of parasitism and stagnation?" "Our economic administrators," he went on, "work for the proletariat, but they are not exempt from human weakness. They can doze off in a beatific quietude instead of being constantly concerned for progress toward communism." In order to keep up the pressure on the bureaucrats, Bukharin said, they must be driven to meet the needs of the people. That means the cheapest prices for the mass of consumers, which can only be delivered if the costs of production are kept to an absolute minimum. Efficiency was thus an imperative of the commitment to a higher living standard for all.

This theme—that the replacement for the capitalist profit motive was the drive to satisfy consumers—was shared by Preobrazhensky, Trotsky's economic theoretician, who differed with Bukharin only in being much more confident that it would be effective. Stalin, of course, did exactly the opposite of what Bukharin and Trotsky proposed, i.e. he cut consumption, turned the state into an absolute monopolist that financed the industrialization of the society precisely by the super profits that could be derived thereby. The result was a system that by totalitarian pressure could effectively squeeze resources out of the masses of workers and peasants and an economy that, as Mikhail Gorbachev realized in the eighties, had all of the drawbacks that Marx—and Bukharin—had ascribed to capitalist monopoly. The Soviet state, rather than the international bourgeoisie, became a "fetter" on production and productivity. In the West there were computers; in the East, the abacus.

In another essay, published in 1925, Bukharin speculated that in his final writings Lenin

* I regard Stalinism as an "anti-socialist 'socialism,'" as a system of bureaucratic collectivism and do not see its history as part of the socialist tradition. But even though the Bolsheviks before Stalin, including Lenin, approved measures that laid the basis for the later tyranny, they were in the 1920s sincere and committed Marxists, however wrong, and their experiences do belong to that tradition.

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had broken with his theory that the road to socialism was along the path of state capitalism, i.e. the monopoly stage of capitalism. Lenin's remarks on the importance of cooperatives, Bukharin said, "puts us in the presence of a program that is totally different [from the perspective of state capitalism]." He quotes Lenin: "Now we have the right to say that the *simple development of cooperatives* . . . becomes identified for us *with the development of socialism itself.*" Did Lenin actually go that far? We will never know. But it is at least possible, and even plausible, that before he died the Bolshevik leader sensed the dangers of centralization in a command economy, what he called "a bureaucratic utopia."

About Trotsky we need not speculate. In a 1932 essay, "The Soviet Economy in Danger," he wrote,

> The innumerable living participants in the economy, state and private, collective and individual, must serve notice of their needs and of their relative strength not only through the statistical determinations of plan commissions but by the direct pressure of supply and demand. *The plan is checked and, to a considerable degree, realized through the market* [emphasis added]. . . . The blueprints produced by the departments must demonstrate their economic efficacy through commercial calculation.

And in his critique of the Stalinist planners in *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky commented that

> the obedient professors managed to create an entire theory according to which the Soviet price, in contrast to the market price, has an exclusively planning or directive character. . . . The professors forgot to explain how you can "guide" a price without knowing real costs, and how you can estimate real costs if all prices express the will of the bureaucracy and not the amount of social labor expended. . . . [Socialist construction is unthinkable] without including in the planned system the direct personal interests of the producer and consumer, their egoism—which in its turn may reveal itself fruitfully only if it has in its service the customary reliable and flexible instrument, money.

There are two aspects to these statements by Trotsky and Bukharin. First, both the "left" and "right" Bolshevik critics of Stalin agreed that markets were an indispensable element in the transition to socialism (if not, to repeat, in the blessed "final state" of socialism itself). Without them, they argued, the system would become bureaucratic, wasteful, inefficient, and incapable of satisfying those basic human needs that were supposed to be the driving force, and the proof of the moral superiority, of the new economy. Second, Trotsky and Bukharin were right, as at least a portion of the present Soviet leadership has tacitly acknowledged (in Bukharin's case, the admission is even spoken aloud).

Stalin, however, settled the political argument by force and in the process liquidated both Trotsky and Bukharin. He proceeded to a version of total planning in which the omnipotent state swallowed up not just the economy but the whole of society.

This does not mean that there were no markets under Stalin. Even in the most extreme days of his rule, people bought consumer goods with money. But the basic decisions with regard to work, production, and consumption were taken by a centralized bureaucracy from on high and almost all the institutions that might mediate between government and citizens were turned into "transmission belts" for official policy. In 1938 and 1940, for instance, it was decreed that everyone would have a work book, that no one could leave a job on pain of criminal punishment for "flitting" from post to post, that the first offense of absenteeism would be punished by "forced labor at the place of employment" (which involved a 25 percent cut in wages), and the second offense by a mandatory jail sentence, and so on. This draconian attack on the rights of workers was introduced at the initiative of "trade unions" reduced to organs of state discipline. And the most severe rules were put in place, not under the siege conditions of World War II, but during a period when Stalin was trusting in his deal with Adolf Hitler.

The investment and production decisions were fixed according to planned, quantitative targets, which facilitated both waste and shoddy goods. If, a believable joke reported, a Soviet pin factory were assigned a quota of so

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many tons of pins, it would turn out one, monstrously large and unusable pin; and if it were told to produce a certain number of pins, it would achieve the numerical goal with a myriad of pins so thin that they were also useless. The collective farms were required to deliver their crops to the state at less than their cost of production. And consumption goods were manufactured, not in response to demand, but according to a preset planners' decision, which meant that waiting in line to buy items in short supply became a major cause of squandered energy in the Soviet Union.

Yet this system, for all of its intolerable human and social costs, "worked," i.e. it allowed the Soviets to create an industrial infrastructure in the space of a decade. Marx gave capitalism enormous credit for having similarly raised the level of economic development by the savagery of "primitive accumulation" *and* denounced the process as morally vicious. But even leaving morality aside, this kind of "planning" was laying the groundwork for the economic crisis of the seventies and eighties.

It is possible to make the initial physical investments in modernization in a brutal way. The slave laborers of the Gulag could be, and were, driven to dig canals because the productivity of a person with a pick or a shovel is not of great moment. That is what the Soviets now refer to as "extensive" growth and it corresponds to the period of "absolute surplus value" when capitalism thrived by working people to the edge of death. But the basis of a truly modern system, particularly in the age of automation and the computer, is "intensive" growth, an exponential increase in productivity that rests upon the facility of both human beings and machines. That requires a concern for the quality of work that slaves, or driven workers, will never exhibit. And even though the Soviet economy was significantly modified between Stalin's death in 1953 and Gorbachev's rise to power in the eighties, the institutional bias remained centralist, quantitative, "extensive," which all but guaranteed the declining growth rates of the last decade and a half.

In Stalin's day, however, there was little or no relief from bureaucratic commands backed up by a repressive state. It was this reality that gave rise to the theory of "totalitarianism," the idea that a totally controlled society without any real sources of internal opposition had actually come into existence. There was an attempt to mobilize the economy by a state that absorbed all of society into its dictatorial political system. In theorizing about this phenomenon, Hannah Arendt wrote in her influential *Origins of Totalitarianism* that "total domination succeeds to the extent that it succeeds in interrupting all channels of communication, those from person to person inside the four walls of privacy no less than the public ones which are safeguarded in democracies by freedom of speech and opinion." The aim, she said, was to make "every person incommunicado."

There were political consequences. If there was no possibility of internal change within the Stalinist empire, that made a hawkish cold war policy of "liberation" all the more logical, since there was no hope that, as the original American "containment" theory of 1947–48 held, time and history would eventually soften Soviet policy. Arendt's book came out when Stalin was still alive, in 1951; a second edition, with an epilogue to deal with the anti-Stalinist rebellions in both Poland and Hungary in 1956, came out in 1958. Even then, Arendt was convinced that the Khrushchev reforms in the Soviet Union had already run their course, that the system was returning to type.

On a more superficial—even frivolous—level, Friedrich Hayek, normally a serious thinker, declared in *The Road to Serfdom* that the British Labour government of 1945 was a precursor of a totalitarian system. This was an attempt to make the case that Stalinism was an inherent tendency of any socialism, even a democratic socialism, a proposition refuted by every event that has occurred since it was first stated.

Stalinism terrified its external enemies as well as its own people. Yet it turned out that opposition and criticism had not been abolished as Arendt thought. Hardly was the tyrant dead than some of the most repressive features of the regime were modified. In 1956, Khrushchev gave his famous speech in which he began to acknowledge the bloody historical record.

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Contrary to Arendt's 1958 speculation that the event was a momentary aberration, the anti-Stalin campaign was most marked between the Twenty-Second Party Congress of 1961 and Khrushchev's downfall in 1964.

The most dramatic break with Stalinist orthodoxy took place in China, not the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

Mao had turned on the Soviets as early as the late fifties. The "Great Leap" was a repudiation of the model of centralized command planning, of giant factories, and a celebration of the utopian potential of the people. But despite the utopian content of both the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution (the latter directed against the evils of bureaucracy that Mao saw writ large in Soviet society), the mode of leadership was still quite Stalinist. That is, Mao believed that he could "write" on the Chinese people, whom he compared to a blank page. And from on high he engineered a revolution-from-below, a reality that became quite apparent in mid-1968 when Mao turned off the enthusiasm of the Red Guards, which he himself had originally decreed and relied on to enforce his will. Decisions were, in short, still taken on a political basis by small cliques—or by one man—and behind closed doors.

Mao died in 1976 and there was an interregnum that lasted until Deng took control in 1979. When that happened, the government decreed that individual peasant families, under the "household responsibility system," could—after paying their taxes, selling a quota of their output to the state, and meeting fees to the collective, which still owned the land—dispose of their surplus in any way they wanted. Industrial enterprises were made more autonomous and they, too, could decide how they used their surplus. Some radicals wanted to go further. They proposed to make the market, rather than the plan, the basis of the economy, to have "regulation" rather than control, and to significantly increase political pluralism.

In the wake of the 1979 changes there were problems and the moderates counterattacked the radicals. But in 1983 there was another period of reform with enterprises given much more latitude to take initiatives on their own, a strengthening of the "household responsibility system," and a new emphasis on foreign trade. In the retail sector, markets became more and more important, capital markets were created, and some enterprises actually sold stock. At the end of 1984, the conservative columnist William Safire wrote in the *New York Times* that the biggest event of the year had been "the embrace of capitalism" by the Chinese Communist party.

That assumed that markets per se, without any regard for their context and content, are always capitalist, an over-simplification that is not at all helpful in explaining what is going on in China. In the midst of the reforms, for instance, Deng at all times insisted on "four cardinal principles": Marxism-Leninism, Mao's thought, party leadership, and continuation of the existing state structure. In 1986, two years after Safire's discovery of "capitalism" in China, 68.7 percent of the industrial output came from the state sector, 29.2 percent from collectives, and 0.3 percent from private enterprises. In retail, the respective figures were 39.4 percent, 36.4 percent and 23.9 percent, which did indeed mark a significant shift. But exactly how a stratified economy, run by a single party, which uses markets to forward its own planned policies, qualifies as "capitalist" is a mystery.

As John King Fairbank put it, "Anyone who concludes that Chinese agriculture, having seen the light and wanting to be more like us, has gone 'capitalist' is making a grievous error. The contract system [Fairbank's translation of the "household responsibility system"] must be seen as the latest phase of statecraft, how to organize the farmers in order to improve their welfare and strengthen the state." And a little later Fairbank writes, "the Deng reforms are not bringing Western-style capitalism to China, except for the state capitalism of corporations that make deals with foreigners, but rather they are bringing an expanded form of what might be called 'bureaucratic socialism'. . . . In other words, a modernization that elsewhere has generally produced a new middle class, in China seems likely to produce a local and mid-level leadership that remains essentially bureaucratic."

It is, at this writing, impossible to say how

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the economic reforms put into practice in the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1988 will change that society. Clearly, Gorbachev has decided to take seriously the need for "intensive growth," productivity, qualitative rather than quantitative measures of output and the use of market criteria in investment policy. In a major report to the Party Central Committee in February 1986, for instance, the Soviet leader told his colleagues that "we must radically change the substance, organization and methods of the work of the financial and credit bodies. Their chief aim is not to exercise petty control over the work of enterprises but to *provide economic incentives and to consolidate money circulation and cost accounting, which is the best possible controller.*" [Emphasis added.]

That means a fundamental reorganization of the State Planning Committee, one of the most powerful bureaucracies in the society. It would also put the state in conflict with the least efficient enterprises, which would not be able to meet the requirements of profitability. And it opens up the possibility, in a society that, for all of its manifold faults, has prided itself on guaranteeing a job to every citizen (even if inefficiently), that unemployment, or at least firings, would become a necessary concomitant of market policies.

Dealing with that problem—putting market mechanisms at the service of social priorities rather than in command of the economy—is an area in which democratic socialists have contributions to make. But before turning to those specifics, it is important to locate the very possibility of a democratic socialist dialogue with communist reformers in a much larger context.

It may well be that the changes now taking place within the communist world define the beginnings of a new era in the relationship between democratic socialism and communism. The definitive split between those two ideologies occurred in the 1930s, when Stalin appropriated a socialist rationale to create a new, antisocialist system. The resulting hostility was not based on misunderstanding. It was the consequence of a real-world conflict between fundamentally different conceptions—and the actual practice—of how to organize, not simply society, but the world. And it was, of course, made all the more acute by the fact that most of the effective democratic socialist parties in the world were European and supported the Atlantic Alliance in the cold war.

Indeed, that geographic dimension of the ideological quarrel was one of its most disturbing aspects, as Willy Brandt openly admitted when he became president of the Socialist International in 1976. Democratic socialism was "Western," largely confined to a European ghetto; communism was "Eastern" and a road of forced modernization for backward economies; and there was a nonaligned Third World, in which, in most cases, "socialism" had strong authoritarian tendencies.

The economic and structural sources of that ideological geography have not been abolished simply because communist reformers have changed their attitudes toward markets. China remains, for all of its material progress, a very poor country, subject to the vicious antisocialist constraints that Marx outlined well over a century ago. The Soviet Union is obviously at a higher economic stage but the institutional weight of its Stalinist history puts an enormous limit upon change. And it is, of course, true that in both the Soviet Union and China reform has come from concerned bureaucrats, none of whom propose mass democratic participation.

At the same time, the old-line Soviet conservatives, committed to defending the very structure of the state, are right: It is extremely difficult to segregate economic and political change, to embark on a course of liberalization in the one sphere without opening up the other. It is not an accident that *Glasnost,* with all of its evident limitations, and *Perestroika* were introduced together. For it is simply impossible to demand initiative and creativity from a labor force that, the moment it leaves the job, is not allowed to think aloud and to discuss freely. Does this mean that democratization will follow quickly and inevitably upon markets? Of course not.

Yet *possibilities* are opened up, not the least because no one knows where reform will lead. And that offers openings for democratic

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socialism that have not existed for more than half a century.

A particular example is relevant here. The adoption of market criteria of efficiency by communist reformers could, we have just seen, mean that workers will lose their jobs in inefficient plants. But doesn't that show that the communists are, willy nilly, driven to accept the classic capitalist discipline, with its special cruelty toward those at the bottom? Not necessarily. For one of the most imaginative socialist attempts to deal with that problem—and one of the most creative illustrations of the use of markets within a planning framework—might become germane to the communist reformers. I refer to the Swedish active labor market policies.

In the Light of European Socialism

At the very outset, it is necessary once again to acknowledge "Swedish exceptionalism," which, in the case of the active labor market policy, is particularly strong. The point is not so much to propose a model for imitation as to examine a rich example of how socialists can combine elements of democratic planning and market efficiency. It is that mix which is relevant to a new international socialism which could make a contribution to democratization in the East.

As far back as the 1920s, the industrial unions of Sweden, the Swedish Labor Federation (LO), had declared their concern with the low-paid workers of the land and the forests. But it was not until 1936, with the metal workers taking an important role, that the notion of a "solidaristic wage policy" came to the fore and only in 1951 was it decisively formulated. According to that concept, the unions would use their bargaining power to reduce the wage differentials within the working class by maximizing the gains for the lowest paid in negotiations with the employers.

There were a number of reasons for adopting this attitude and one of them had to do with a refusal to accept the verdict of the existing labor markets. Under "normal" capitalist circumstances, the employees of the most backward sectors would receive lower wages than those who worked for advanced, highly competitive companies. But the labor movement, the LO concluded, should favor the universalistic principle that there should be the same pay for the same expenditure of effort throughout the entire economy. And that meant that the unions should have a conscious policy of reshaping the outcomes of the labor market. This tactic was adopted on "trade union," not feminist, grounds but it was one of the reasons why women in Sweden were to reach near parity with men. They benefited from a policy directed not to their gender but to the inferior position to which the "normal" workings of markets would have assigned them.

That policy was definitively adopted in 1951. Now, however, the economic environment was completely different from that of the thirties. Instead of mass unemployment and depression, there was full employment and the danger of inflation. How could the solidaristic wage policy, and all the other social goals of the unions, be made compatible with price stability? The answer was formulated by two union economists, Gosta Rehn and Rudolf Meidner, and it was taken up by the LO.

Ten years before the economist A.W. Phillips published his famous article on the relationship between joblessness and wages, the Swedish unions had identified what came to be known as the "Phillips Curve."* That was the theoretical basis in almost all of the Keynesian countries of the 1960s for the notion that there was an inevitable "trade off" between full employment and price stability, something that Keynes himself believed and that Phillips had documented as a historical fact during a century of British experience. But the Swedish unions and socialists were not willing to accept periods of unemployment, even at relatively low levels, in order to deal with inflation and to make other social priorities possible.

As Meidner and his associate, Anna Hedborg, put the LO attitude in a retrospective of the early eighties, "The Phillips curve states propositions about certain economic relations

* In "The Relation Between Unemployment and the Rate of Change of Money Wages in the United Kingdom, 1861–1972," Phillips argued that low unemployment led to higher wages (and inflation) and joblessness to a downward pressure on wages.

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under given institutional and economic policy assumptions. It is these assumptions that must be changed."

Prior to the adoption of the active labor-market policy, particularly in 1949–50, the Swedish unions had effectively experimented, like their counterparts throughout the West, with an "incomes policy" as a way of dealing with the problem. That is, the unions voluntarily accepted a two-year moratorium on wage increases and took much of the responsibility for dealing with inflation upon themselves. Relying on the "general" mechanisms of economic policy, it turned out to be a most fallible instrument of fighting even wage increases. For despite the moratorium there was an upward "wage drift." It was the result of local conditions, of piece workers making more money, of entire new categories of labor coming into the market, and other factors that escaped the macro-economic net.

Wage restraint also posed the incongruous issue of unions policing workers' demands rather than fighting for them. It also affected both the solidaristic wage policy and the efficiency of a national economy that was very much oriented toward competition on the world market. Ironically, the refusal to countenance low wages meant that marginal enterprises, which could survive in other economies, were subjected to particular pressure because they had the highest number of the underpaid. They could solve this problem either by becoming more productive—which would raise the efficiency level of the entire economy—or by going out of business. The Swedish socialists did not retreat in the presence of that last possibility of a plant shutdown (and the relevance to the Soviet problems of restructuring is, I assume, obvious). They proceeded to change the consequences of that market outcome by selective measures that saw to it that the workers would not suffer as a result of shutdowns or rationalization.

Local labor exchanges were created under the direction of a national Labor Market Board. A whole range of options was made available for dealing with the specific conditions of an enterprise or industry in a given area. There were job retraining, public works employment, a sophisticated system of identifying new openings, aid to employers in creating new jobs, subsidies to cover the moving costs of those who had to go to a new region, and, in many ways, last and least, unemployment compensation. In 1979, for instance, the Swedes devoted only 10 percent of the labor-market funds to jobless benefits, compared to 31 percent for retraining, 13 percent for support to cooperating employers, and 45 percent for other measures to help the individual find new work. The goal was not to tolerate even subsidized joblessness, but to find useful work for every single citizen.

There is no reason to depict these policies as Utopia in action. There were grave difficulties in the seventies and eighties because of the slowdown in Western growth, and a good part of the success of the Socialists after their return to power in 1983 was the result of an old-fashioned competitive devaluation of the currency. But there were also new measures of public employment to deal with the specific problems of youth joblessness. However, I don't want to go into the actual workings of the system in any detail. I want instead to generalize from this rich experience to an overall socialist attitude toward the relationship between plan and markets.

How, it might be asked, can policies designed to defend workers against the impact of capitalist markets be used as a model for the socialist future? And isn't this objection reinforced by the fact that those policies were adopted as pragmatic, trade-union responses to a specific economic problem? In fact, a conception of the relationship between markets and plan is implicit in this Swedish history that could be quite relevant to the new socialism of the twenty-first century.

The positive aspect of Swedish policy was well stated by Jacques Attali in 1978, a time when he, and the entire French socialist movement, was quite critical of "mere" social-democratic solutions. Attali wrote that "plan and market are two inseparable sites of the encounter between the production of demand and supply: the plan participates in the creation of a market liberated from the logic of capital; the market transmits the collective demand

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elaborated under the plan to the enterprises." Translated into Swedish: the plan decommodifies the labor market and treats workers as human beings but it does so in response to signals from that labor market.

In putting these considerations in their larger context I will assume that the reality of the next half century or so will be nonutopian. Marx thought that ultimately there would be so much abundance that "economizing" would no longer be necessary; that, as Alec Nove put it, resources would be available at a zero price. As formulated in the anticipation of automation in Marx's *Grundrisse,* science applied to economic ends would so exponentially increase productivity that there would no longer be the possibility, much less the necessity, of measuring and compensating contributions to output in terms of hours of labor expended. At that point, "*the surplus labor* of the masses has ceased to be the precondition for the development of universal wealth and the *non-labor* of the few is no longer the precondition of the development of the universal power of the human brain."

Nove is quite right to reject this automated utopia as a guide to the formulation of socialist policy in the contemporary world. Whatever unimaginable potential there may be in technology, total abundance will not happen in the next fifty or even a hundred years, which means that it is irrelevant to even the most "long-run" planning. Yet I think Nove misses the possibilities of real-world approximations of that utopia. Hunger could be abolished in the next period even if scarcity cannot be, not least because the world already has the capacity to feed itself. And we must be sensitive, not simply to the material meaning of such a development, but to its moral capacity to transform "human nature" as well.

But for the world as a whole, economizing is clearly on the agenda for any time frame suitable to serious analysis. The question then is, how does one economize in socialist fashion? To answer that question we go back to some ABCs.

In any dynamic society this side of total abundance, there must be, over the not-so-long run, a surplus from the productive system. Society cannot consume all that it creates in a year or a decade; it cannot eat its seed corn. At a minimum, there must be provision for depreciation and new investment. The necessity of such a surplus product takes the form of profit in, and only in, capitalism. It is only in that system that the surplus is the property of private individuals or corporations, which carry out the social function of depreciation and investment in order to maximize their own interest. In the Soviet Union under the Stalin model, for instance, there was a surplus product that was not assigned to a class of private capitalists, but rather was allocated by a class of bureaucrats who made sure, as Trotsky well put it, that the one thing the plan did not ignore was their own well-being.

In a democratic socialist society constrained by scarcity and committed to the global abolition of poverty, the surplus product would be socially and democratically allocated. And so long as the producers and/or the ecosphere are not violated in the process, such a society will, on grounds of solidarity and social justice, be as concerned with efficiency as is capitalism. That "efficiency" will be defined in a different way than under capitalism—to express social goals and not just private interest—is obvious. But there is still a moral, as well as an economic necessity, to minimize the human and material inputs in production—in the public sector as well as the private—in order to have a maximum surplus product for the work of justice.

Let me be specific on how this implies the use of both planning and market principles. It was, and is, one of the great accomplishments of European social democracy to have removed the minimum necessities of health care from market allocation. But in both Britain and Holland that accomplishment was under severe attack in the eighties. In part, that is because the socialization of health care does indeed increase demand as "ordinary" people want the kind of care once available only to the elite.

It is also true that the nonmarket sector can develop inefficiencies of its own. And that then opens it up to the attack of "privatizing" conservatives. In Margaret Thatcher's Britain, for instance, 10 percent of health care came

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under private health insurance policies, and in the discussion of National Health in the eighties there were more than a few who wanted to extend the scope of for-profit care. Indeed, Thatcher tried to quintuple its role and in many cases the assault on public health is being led by corporations from the socially backward United States. This threatens one of the greatest socialist triumphs over the "logic of capital."

When the National Health system was created by the 1945 Labour government, it was established as a *universal* entitlement. In part, this was an appropriately negative response to the means-testing of social programs in the depression; in part, it was the assertion of a basic socialist principle that medical care should be a right of the citizen, not of the poor citizen alone. With privatization, however, there is a tendency toward the "Americanization" of the entire system, i.e. toward the creation of two separate systems of medicine: a publicly financed one for those at the bottom and the middle of the income distribution; private financing—and superior care—for those at the top.

The private enterprise attack on socialist universality is, it should be noted, an inherent tendency of a society that is no longer entirely capitalist but certainly not yet socialist. Under such circumstances, private profit makers will try to "cream" off the affluent functions in a given sector and graciously allow the state to socialize the remaining losses. That trend cannot be successfully combated simply by appealing to egalitarian value systems (although in Britain in the eighties, it is clear that there is enormous political support for *national* health). The public sector has to respond to the private market attack—to markets—by controlling costs without sacrificing quality or the principle of universalism. In the mid-1980s, the Swedish socialists also addressed this issue. They have introduced reforms that seek to achieve private, market levels of efficiency in the public sector without compromising the basic commitment to services based on need.

Sometimes critically important ethical problems, which deserve to be dealt with in a calculus more humane than that of profit and loss, are involved. Medical technology now makes it possible to prolong a life of sorts for the very old if major, and rather expensive, investments are made in sophisticated technology. Is that a morally and socially sound use of resources? In *Setting Limits,* the bio-ethicist Daniel Callahan argues that, in the name of other health and social priorities, one cannot make such an openended commitment to maintain life without regard to cost. In Britain, he notes with approval, National Health has emphasized "improving quality of life through primary-care medicine and well-subsidized home care and institutional programs for the elderly rather than through life-extending acute-care medicine." In the United States, with its two-tier health structure, there has been a tendency to invest in the high-tech care of those who can pay for it.

So questions of efficiency—sometimes posed as profound choices relating to life and death—are important even in the nonmarket sector. They are also critical if the new socialism is to commit itself to *decentralized* forms of social ownership that open up new spaces for personal freedom and creativity as well as providing for the possibility of bottom-up control of the economy on a human scale.

Either, Alec Nove argues, there is a centralized and authoritarian plan for the allocation of resources, or there must be markets. There is, he asserted in a debate with a sophisticated "orthodox" Marxist, Ernest Mandel, no third possibility. Nove, I think, overstates this counterposition and Mandel projects a vision of democratic planning that is at least possible. The problem is, Mandel's model requires heroic consumers who would be willing to attend endless meetings in order to assure that they get exactly what they want. I am not sure that is feasible; I am quite sure it is not desirable. For one of the most effective arguments against socialism, as Oscar Wilde realized long ago, is that it would create a society with interminable meetings.

More broadly, Nove is right if one is serious about decentralized social ownership. What is the point of having a variety of forms of participatory control at the base—in nationalized industries, cooperatives, small private enterprises—if all of the critical decisions are to be made centrally? That would obviate one of the greatest gains that could come from that structure of ownership—namely, the encourage-

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ment of independence on the part of workers. For one of the sources of socialist productivity should be precisely that liberation of creativity, which is, under capitalism, smothered by the antagonistic relations on the shop floor.

The French notion of "worker self-managed socialism" (*socialisme autogestionaire*) was subverted by the events that caused the Socialists to make a radical change of course while in government. But it has a relevance to the socialism of the future. And it is of some moment that all of the proponents of this approach understood that, if there is to be genuine grass-roots autonomy, then there must be a market space—modified by planning priorities, of course—in which the democratic enterprises are free to exercise their communal imagination and interact without supervision from above.

If, however, all decisions were taken by central planners, even if they were working under the instructions of the people, one would lose that new source of productivity. For the latter requires that the enterprise—private or public, large or small—have the possibility of coming up with new ideas and products. And that leads to what must seem to be a very heretical thought for a socialist: that there must be sources of individual and collective gain in this process.

Of course socialism will be marked by the expansion of nonmaterial incentives, by the degree to which people will strive for excellence on social grounds or simply because it is its own reward. But so long as there is scarcity and discretionary income, so long as there must be a *social* concern with economizing inputs and therefore linking performance and success, just so long is there a necessity for material incentives. And that situation will most certainly obtain for the foreseeable future. Obviously socialists will at the same time seek to radically narrow the inequality characteristic of capitalist society, which is not, as the system's defenders claim, a functional necessity but a matter of ethos and legitimated greed.

But isn't it true that markets, even under optimum socialist conditions, inherently encourage self-seeking and even greed? That they are antithetical to a society based on solidarity and cooperation?

The evidence is ambiguous. There is no doubt that, with the rise of the mass standard of living in advanced capitalism in the West, millions have been liberated from the primordial struggle for necessities and have freely chosen paths of culture, learning, and service. So we might optimistically hope that rising levels of material satisfaction, even if far short of abundance, will change human motivation and make people impervious to the corruptions that have historically accompanied competition. But at the same time, we know that the youth of the West in the sixties, sometimes proclaimed as a "post-materialist generation," were often as acquisitive as their elders, different only in what they coveted, not in coveting, disdaining suburban comforts and exalting consumer electronics. Even more dispiriting, not a few of these rebels became well-adjusted members of societies with chronic poverty and unemployment.

Socialists should not passively wait to see how these ambiguities turn out. The labor market can be consciously shaped so that there are more opportunities for socially meaningful work that do not require heroic sacrifice. The prejudice for the private over the public is, after all, an artifact of a system that carefully favors the former over the latter. In other words, the psychological reaction to a socialist use of markets is not a given, but a policy issue. At the same time, to repeat an earlier warning, there is no socialist market utopia. Making self-interest—including collective self-interest—the instrument of community purpose will be a contradictory, and even dangerous, idea for the foreseeable future. It is also necessary.

The insightful—and heterodox—Yugoslavian Marxist, Svetozar Stojanovic, has made a most important point in this regard. On the one hand, he writes, worker self-management can lead to a "decentralized oligarchy," to an egoism, a sort of collective capitalism, of the democratic enterprise. In that case, the logic of capital takes on a communal form within the framework of the market. On the other hand, "self-management is not only threatened by statism, but also by a utopian image of human nature that leads to the naive expectation that

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self-managed groups produce rationally, without being challenged by competition. In a system without competition, solidarity turns into its opposite, into parasitism." The market is not a sufficient condition for the socialist functioning of self-management, but it is a necessary condition.

Integrate Stojanovic's point with the Swedish labor market experience. One of the aims of the Swedish unions was, precisely, to counteract the market outcome according to which workers in advanced companies get higher wages than those in less successful industries. But at the same time, the Swedes did not abolish the labor-market mechanism itself; they restructured it to meet their priorities. In the case posed by Stojanovic, a similar solution would be appropriate: Planned policies to see to it that the productivity of worker-managed enterprises would be, in some measure, shared by the society without abolishing the local incentives for that productivity.

So there must be room in the new socialism for initiative from the base and one of the ways of encouraging that is precisely through markets that will reward—in the sense I have just defined—the most innovative producers. A cooperative should be motivated, say, to produce medical technologies that would make the nonprofit health sector more effective and free resources for other purposes; a hospital should be able to use its expertise to choose between medical technologies and to pick the one which most meets its needs. And this is particularly important, as Nove insists, in the area of capital goods where the "consumers" consist of other enterprises that must make a self-interested assessment of what they buy.

This means, as Jacques Attali suggests, that there must be room for failure in a socialist society. An incompetent cooperative or an ineffective management in a socialized industry wastes human skills and materials that could be put to a better social use and, as the Swedish socialists have understood within the context of capitalism, there must be socially acceptable ways of putting an end to such activities. The resulting "discipline" of markets must not be vicious, as it is now, where entire communities were sacrificed in Britain under Thatcher in order to make industry "lean" and competitive. But, particularly if one is serious about the commitment to abolish world poverty, there must be *a* discipline. Here the issue is not whether there are to be markets, but what kind of markets, with what kind of consequences.

That generalization applies to the area in which there is the most obvious case for socialist markets: consumer choice.

In the capitalist theory of "consumer sovereignty," it is the individual in the marketplace who dictates the patterns of production. In reality, monopoly capital produces that which will yield the largest profit, uses all the wiles of psychology and science to make sure that the consumer chooses what is good for the corporate bottom line, and will generate and satisfy pseudo-needs while desperate human needs—say for affordable housing in the decaying central cities of Britain in the eighties—are not met. Above all, under the consumer "democracy" of contemporary capitalism, the votes are determined by income and wealth and the market is thus a mechanism for transmitting the desires of the privileged.

But, as Anthony Crosland suggested in *The Future of Socialism,* if there were a much more egalitarian society, then, *and only then,* would the essential virtue of markets really come into play. They would function as a decentralized and instantaneous device for registering the needs of people as determined by the people themselves. This they cannot do under contemporary capitalism, so that one of the basic socialist critiques of the prevailing system is that it systematically rigs and frustrates the free choice it claims as its greatest virtue. The new socialists can, and should, argue that their policies would lead to the liberation of markets from the manipulation to which they are subjected under capitalism.

In at least three areas, then—the efficiency of the nonmarket sector, the relations between decentralized democratic enterprises, and consumer choice—markets have an important role to play in the new socialism.

Markets are obviously not acceptable to socialists if they are seen as automatic and infallible mechanisms for making decisions behind the backs of those who are affected by

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them. That is indeed a profoundly capitalist notion and the new socialism should reject it out of hand. But within the context of a plan, markets could be, *for the first time,* an instrument for truly maximizing the freedom of choice of individuals and communities.

The aim, then, is a socialism that makes markets a tool of its nonmarket purposes. Socialists can argue that, in liberating markets from the capitalist context which frustrates their virtues, the visible hand can use the invisible hand for its own purposes. □

Faulty Pacemakers and False Arguments

We hear a lot these days about the virtues of "the free market," some of it from ideologues who want to dismantle what remains of the welfare state in the United States, but some of it from people in Eastern Europe who are utterly and rightly fed up with the overcentralized, bureaucratic and inefficient economies from which they suffer. Partly through malevolence, partly through innocence, these economies are labeled "socialist," even though for many years now democratic socialists have assailed both the politics and economics of the communist dictatorships. Still, one can understand why someone in Poland might think Milton Friedman's brand of laissez-faire attractive. And of course this is gleefully taken up by the right-wingers in the capitalist countries.

But perhaps the glee is excessive and the hosannahs for "the free market" unwarranted. Let me cite two instances—no doubt extreme but with a certain symptomatic value—of what can happen under "the free market":

On September 9, 1988 a federal jury found G.D. Searle & Co. "negligent in the testing and marketing of its Copper-7 birth-control device, and it awarded $8.75 million in damages to the plaintiff in the case . . . [The jury] concluded that Searle had *intentionally misrepresented* the safety of the intrauterine device. . . ." (Emphasis added.) This is not a matter of a kitchen gadget; it involves the health of thousands of women. "Intentionally misrepresented . . ." (*New York Times*, September 10, 1988)

Searle looks positively benevolent, however, when compared to the Cordis Corporation of Miami, which pleaded guilty to selling heart pacemakers it knew were defective. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of these pacemakers were sold before the Food and Drug Administration charged four executives of Cordis with filing false statements about their product. "In its plea [of guilty]," reported the *New York Times,* August 31, 1988, "Cordis admitted that it had *intentionally misled* buyers about the quality" of the pacemakers. (Emphasis added.) Most persons with such pacemakers didn't need replacements through surgery, but in some cases "doctors had recommended that the devices be removed."

Are these businessmen any better than the thugs who peddle dope to street kids? And what is their behavior but an extreme instance of that maniacal greed that can make capitalism so ugly? Sometimes this takes relatively mild forms, as with the admitted guilt of the Beach Nut company in watering down its juice products; sometimes it can take the callous form of endangering human life, as with Searle and Cordis.

It will be said, and reasonably so, that most manufacturers are not so vicious; indeed, many are honest. That's probably true; constraints of conscience operate in almost any society; and probably, plant managers in a communist economy show a similar range of moral behavior, from the notably scrupulous to the shamefully inhumane. But there are two points here worth remembering: First, that no particular virtue is inherent in "the free market," and indeed, the pressures of a capitalist economy can readily lead to dishonesty in behalf of profit. Second, that constant surveillance, democratic alertness, and steady watchfulness are required in all societies. So, please, a little less baloney about the virtues of "free enterprise" and a little more honesty about the way antisocial behavior can crop up here, there, and everywhere.

—I.H.□

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David Brody

BARRIERS OF INDIVIDUALISM

In the Path of American Unions

Consider the teachers' strikes which have become a familiar part of the opening of the school year around the United States every September. Negotiations stall. The union sets a strike date. The school superintendent places a notice in the local press for substitutes. There is never any lack of applicants. School remains at least formally open while the teachers picket outside. And then there is a settlement and they go back to work.

To relate this scenario to an Australian audience, as I had occasion to do several times during a recent semester at Sydney University, is invariably to evoke titters of laughter or a shocked silence, followed by a flood of questions. How was it possible for a public official to try to break a strike? (Australians generally knew about the PATCO strike of 1981, but discounted it as an aberration of a generally unfathomable Reagan administration.) What kind of people were Americans that they would scab on one another? And, anyway, where was the labor movement? Why was there no sympathy strike to keep the schools properly shut down? This incredulous reaction exposed to me in an especially forceful way what any observant American visitor to Australia quickly discovers—the immensely different place accorded the labor movement in the two societies.

By "place" I mean not so much the role that trade unions play as the regard in which they are held by the larger society. This is admittedly a difficult distinction. By any international standard, trade unionism is powerful in Australia. Union membership stands at 56 percent of the labor force. A Labor government has been in power since 1983. The Australian Council of Trade Unions is not only the primary constituent of the Labor party, but is independently a principal in making national economic policy by means of an accord with the government in 1983 aimed at improving the competitiveness of the lagging Australian economy. The amazement of Australian audiences at my tale of American teachers' strikes certainly arose in some measure from a healthy respect for the power and militancy of Australian unionism. But their response also reflected the regard they had for the labor movement. The difference with the United States is perhaps best captured by how trade unions are treated under the labor laws of the two countries. Under the Australian arbitration system, it is assumed that workers will be represented by unions; registration involves only the question of which union is appropriate for a given group of workers. The central thrust of American labor law, on the other hand, is to determine whether or not workers want union representation. If trade unionism is taken as a given, then strikebreaking—inherently a life-threatening attack on a union—is almost by definition a bad thing, and especially abhorrent at the hands of public officials such as superintendents of schools.

The Australian comparison is no more than a device for bringing my subject into focus. It perhaps sharpens our sense of the quite different—and lesser—regard in which the labor movement is held in America, but not with any precision. For that, we must turn to more systematic evidence. Ever since 1936, public opinion about organized labor has been continuously and ever more elaborately surveyed. Public opinion research is no place for

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an amateur: it is an uncertain science at best, and notoriously hard to interpret. Fortunately, the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, expert in this area, has recently published a detailed survey of how labor has fared in public opinion polls. He finds "a dismal picture for organized labor." In 1981, the approval/disapproval rating of labor unions (55 percent/35 percent) stood at the lowest point since the Gallup poll first asked this question in 1936.

In ratings of the ethical and moral practices of twenty-five occupational groups in the early 1980s, labor leaders stood at the bottom. In a 1979 poll that asked whether it would be acceptable for a labor leader to become president, 53 percent said no, 30 percent said yes. For business executives, the findings were 25 percent no, 59 percent yes. (To refer back to the Australian comparison: the current prime minister, Bob Hawke, had earlier served as head of the ACTU.) In 1978, the Roper poll asked "whether you think the country would be better or worse off if certain groups had more influence and freedom to do what they think best." For organized labor, 64 percent thought the country would be worse off, only 10 percent thought better off. This was the worst showing of the seven groups tested.

Nor is the labor movement seen as at one with the working class. In fact, a sharp divergence obtains here. In a 1976 poll, for example, 82 percent expressed positive feelings toward workers, 32 percent toward unions. And while nearly two-thirds thought labor unions exerted too much influence in politics in 1976, only four percent thought the same of "workingmen," while 53 percent thought the latter had too little influence (compared to five percent for unions). Consistently, opinion polls register concern over the power of the labor unions. Over half rated them too powerful in 1976. In 1985, despite a decade of labor setbacks, 46 percent still thought so.[1] Thus, from a variety of angles, public opinion research draws us to this conclusion: in America trade unionism is regarded as a suspect institution to some degree at odds with the larger society.

It is suspect, Lipset suggests, because its collective character places organized labor at odds with the value system of the larger society. Lipset's point can be readily demonstrated in the historical record. The individualistic values embodied in American law, for example, kept labor in persistent legal trouble during the nineteenth-century. In the early labor conspiracy cases, the main charge was unlawful coercion of individual workers who were unwilling to abide by union standards. Later in the century, the labor injunction was justified as a legitimate protection of property rights of employers threatened by union power; and the yellow-dog contract, by the equally fundamental right of contract between consenting individuals. Trades-unionists opposed to the absolute freedom of contract, wrote Woodrow Wilson in 1907, were men "who have neither the ideas nor the sentiments needed for the maintenance or enjoyment of liberty." Until political expediency caught up with him, the future president pronounced himself "a fierce partizan [sic] of the Open Shop and of everything that makes for industrial liberty."

Or listen to Edward Atkinson, a Rhode Island manufacturer, explaining to an audience of workers twenty years earlier why it was against their interest to form a trade union. "If you put first-class spinners and weavers in the same place with second-class spinners and weavers, without discrimination, it will be just like packing first quality and second quality goods in the same bale; they will all be sold for just what the seconds are worth." The workingman should not aspire to a collectivity uniting everyone at the level of the least, but "an even chance in the use of the only thing we all have in common, whether we be rich or poor—the use of his own time. The man who comprehends the use of time, and who keeps control of his own time, his hands, and his brain, will come out on top every time." And then the peroration: "There is always plenty of room on the front seats in every profession, every trade, every art, every industry. There are men in this audience who will fill some of those seats, but they won't be boosted into them from behind; they will get there by using their own brains and their own hands."

We do not know whether his audience of workers found Atkinson's message persuasive; or whether hard experience had taught them to doubt the reality of "front seats" for any of

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them, or even of the likelihood of a fair reward for a hard day's work in the mills; or, indeed, as much recent scholarship would suggest, whether the textile workers did not hold a rival ethic of solidarity and mutuality. But the force with which he made his case bespeaks Atkinson's own immense confidence in an ethic of competitive individualism.

The existence of that value system cannot, however, in itself explain the dubious regard in which trade unionism came to be held in American society. What is left out is the element of human agency. There is, in fact, a particular history of how the American labor movement tried to define its place in the larger society, and of why this resulted in the hostility recorded in modern opinion polls.

In 1834, the General Trades' Union of Boston put forth a "Declaration of Rights" that began: "When a number of individuals associate together in a public manner for the purpose of promoting their common welfare, respect for public opinion, the proper basis of a republic[an] form of government, under which they associate, requires that they should state to their fellow citizens, the motives which actuate them, in adopting such a course." Sound familiar? It is of course an echo of the opening words of the Declaration of Independence. "With the Fathers of our Country," the Boston unionists continued, "we hold that all men are created free and equal; endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

These rights were expressed not through Atkinson's competitive individualism, but were linked instead to a producer ethic. "Labor, being the legitimate and only real source of wealth, and the laboring classes the majority and real strength of every country, their interest and happiness ought to be the principal care of Government." Just the reverse had happened in practice. "We already behold the wealthy fast verging into aristocracy, the laboring classes into a state of comparative dependence." And the effect, disastrous to a healthy republican society, was to deny to "the working class that standing in the community to which their usefulness entitles them." The purpose of the labor movement was to reverse this unnatural process, "until we behold our young men aspiring to the character and title of virtuous and intelligent mechanics, as the most certain means to obtain the respect and confidence of their fellow citizens."

The nineteenth-century labor movement thus attached its cause to the country's republican heritage—to equal rights, to citizenship, to the vision of a virtuous society of independent producers. For many years, the Fourth of July was a workers' holiday, celebrated by them with such toasts as: "The Working Men, the legitimate children of '76, their sires left them the legacy of freedom and equality. They are now of age and are laboring to guarantee the principles of the Revolution." If we lack nineteenth-century opinion polls, we have much else that suggests the resonance of labor's republicanism in the larger society.

So compelling was the free labor ideology that it was appropriated by the emerging Republican Party during the sectional crisis of the 1850s. "Labor is prior to, and independent of capital," said Lincoln. And his fellow Republican William Evarts: Labor is "the source of all our wealth, of all our progress, of all our dignity and value." For a time, David Montgomery has argued, the labor movement assumed that the political struggle against slavery marked the opening stage of a larger battle for the achievement of its own republican vision. "What would it profit us, as a nation," asked the labor leader William Sylvis in 1865, "were we to preserve our institutions and destroy the morals of the people; save our Constitution and sink the masses into hopeless ignorance, poverty, and crime? . . . Remember . . . that all popular governments must depend for their stability and success upon the virtue and intelligence of the masses."

That translated into the demand for Eight Hours, which became the central goal of the National Labor Union that Sylvis founded in 1866. But the Republican party, if long on rhetoric, came up short when confronted by a demand that would have to be paid for out of the pockets of capital. The National Labor Union foundered on the discovery of this harsh

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truth. But it is foundered even more on its own institutional weaknesses.

From the very beginning, the movement had searched without success for an institutional strategy for labor republicanism. Its natural venue was politics, but in a system dominated by two mass parties little scope could be found for independent labor politics. There is a long and fascinating history of experimentation with labor parties stretching back to the workingmen's parties of the 1830s, but it is a history of nearly unvarying failure, in which the NLU's National Labor Reform party was but the last. The programmatic problems were equally troubling. How was an exploitative industrial order to be transformed into the cooperative commonwealth? The nostrums that were forthcoming—agrarianism, eight hours, greenbackism, cooperation—never quite made the grade. They were productive of brilliant theorizing and flashes of popular enthusiasm, but not of practical results. And there was an intractable organizational problem. A movement founded on a producerist ethic had to be open not only to wage-earners, but to all "producers." What structure would accommodate and discipline a constituency that included nearly anyone who felt like joining up?

The last great assault on these problems was undertaken by the Knights of Labor, which enjoyed a spectacular success in the first half of the 1880s, and suffered an equally spectacular collapse in the second half.

At this juncture, there occurred one of those rare moments in which the history of a social movement is made by conscious choice. The key actors were a small circle of trade union radicals, among them Samuel Gompers. Mainly German Marxists, they were not locked into the tradition of republicanism. They thought in terms of class struggle and recognized, as J. P. McDonnell had remarked, that they faced a harder task than their European brothers because "in the United States our capitalist enemy resides in the breast of almost everyone." Out of debates within the First International, moreover, they had identified the trade union as the only effective means of fostering working-class development in America.

In founding the American Federation of Labor in 1886, they were bent on defining a labor movement that would survive in the American environment. "We do not wish to raise a structure whose foundations are rotten, being built up by repeating the errors of others who have preceded us." The "pure-and-simple" philosophy that guided them was captured most succinctly by Gompers's colleague in the Cigarmakers Union, Adolph Strasser, in testimony before a Senate committee:

> Q. You are seeking to improve home matters first?
> A. Yes, sir; I look first to the trade I represent; I look first to cigars, to the interests of men who employ me to represent their interests.
> Q. I was only asking you in regard to your ultimate ends.
> A. We have no ultimate ends. We are going on from day to day. We are fighting only for immediate objects—objects that can be realized in a few years.
> Q. I see that you are a little sensitive lest it should be thought that you are a mere theorizer. . . .
> A. Well, we say in our constitution that we are opposed to theorists, and I have to represent the organization here. We are all practical men . . . .

Visionary thinking was to be avoided. "The ills of our social and economic system cannot be cured by patent medicine," Gompers wrote. He did not dismiss the possibility of larger change. In more radical moments, he could still speak of trade-union unity as "the germ of the future state." But such thinking had to be put aside. "I am perfectly satisfied to fight the battles of today, of those here, and those that come tomorrow, so their conditions may be improved, and they may be better prepared to fight the contests or solve the problems that may be presented to them. . . . Every step that the workers make or take, every vantage point gained, is a solution in itself."

Such a movement would eschew independent politics, which caused internal dissension and distracted the movement from its main tasks. Unions should never seek "at the hands of the government what they could accomplish by their own initiative and activities." Nor could there be a place for any but wage workers, organized by trades and led by fellow workers. All of this was grounded on this rock-bottom Marxist maxim: "Economic organization and control over economic power were

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the fulcrum which made possible influence and power in all other fields."

Thus on all the issues in which labor republicanism had gone in one direction—on politics, on program, on constituency—pure-and-simple unionism went in the other. By lodging its principles in the new AFL, Gompers meant to make them the exclusive basis for trade-union organization. In so doing, of course, he boldly exposed to public view his pure-and-simple brand of labor movement—in which economic power was everything, in which organization served above all as the basis of economic power, in which the cement of organization was the immediate interest of the members.

If Gompers's approach was well-calculated to build a viable trade-union movement, it did so by distancing that movement from traditional republican values. Trade-union leaders by no means denied republicanism its centrality in American society or, indeed, in the lives of workers as citizens. But not as the basis for the labor movement.

Here, then, was a central paradox of American labor history: To embrace the republican values of the larger society was to have a labor movement that would not work. And to have a movement that would work required some degree of disengagement from those American values. It was Gompers's genius to see what had to be done,[2] and he can scarcely be faulted for the choice he made.

The labor movement has lived with that choice ever since. I do not mean to suggest that history stopped with Gompers. Even in his lifetime, the AFL expanded, grew ethnically and ideologically diverse, established links to the state, and became a significant force in American politics. During the 1930s, in the heyday of the CIO, the labor movement seemed on the brink of social-democratic transformation, and, after that moment faded, long remained a central actor in liberal Democratic politics. Yet organized labor never abandoned what was essential in the pure-and-simple formulation, a truth perhaps more evident during hard going—as in the 1920s or the 1980s—than in flush times. And, by the same token, it never managed to reclaim the moral legitimacy given the nineteenth-century movement by labor republicanism.

How heavy has that liability been for the modern labor movement? Enormous, if one accepts the argument advanced by Lipset in a companion essay to his public-opinion analysis.[3] Until the 1930s, trade unionism had normally been confined to about ten percent of the nonagricultural labor force. Then union density began to grow, reaching a high point of nearly 33 percent in 1953. This was, Lipset suggests, an exceptional event, reflecting a shift in the country to more collectivist values as a result of the Great Depression. Since the 1950s, affluent America has drifted back to the older value system of individualism, and the result has been an erosion of trade-union strength down toward pre-New Deal levels. Union representation has fallen below 18 percent of the nonagricultural labor force.[4] Lipset finds a significant correlation between a key indicator of public opinion—the Gallup survey of approval/disapproval of unions, which moved from a disapproval rating of 14 percent in 1957 to a record high of 35 percent in 1981—and the decline in union density over that period.

The burden of Lipset's argument, however, is not statistical, but comparative. There has been no lack of explanation for labor's dramatic decline since the mid 1970s—the deregulation of major markets, the shift to a service economy, the faltering competitiveness of the manufacturing sector in an increasingly internationalized economy, a labor law inimicable to labor's organizing efforts. Plausible as these reasons may be, in Lipset's view they lose much of their force when applied cross-nationally, for they do not seem to explain in any clear pattern how the labor movements of other industrial economies have fared. What remains, then, are differences in national values.

The anchor for this broad claim is a detailed Canadian-American comparative analysis. At the very time that the union sector in the United States was shrinking, in Canada it was growing. Roughly equal in the mid-1950s, both movements experienced a similar slow downward trend until the mid-1960s, then sharply

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diverged. Canadian union density currently stands at 40 percent, well over twice that of the United States. Yet no two national movements have been more alike. They have common historical roots. Canadian unions mostly began as the "international" segments of American national unions. While a process of disassociation has been under way—most recently in the case of the Auto Workers—institutional structures and rules remain pretty much the same.

Canadian labor law, moreover, is patterned on the National Labor Relations Act. In one respect, Canadian law has been seen by critics of the NLRA as much more favorable to union representation. Most provinces will certify unions on a show of dues-paying membership; the others mandate very quick elections. In the United States, there are normally long delays which enable employers to mount anti-union campaigns. Lipset, however, minimizes the significance of these problems. He cites research that shows little impact of delays or employer opposition on election outcomes, and ascribes the low current rate of union success—45 percent—to the declining sympathy for unions in the population as a whole.[5]

The economic settings, finally, are also in many ways similar, with many common employers, a comparable level of industrial development, and many economic links. In fact, business conditions in Canada—unemployment, inflation, low productivity—have been even less favorable to trade unions than in the United States, and Canada has shifted even more decisively from a manufacturing to a service economy.

The vigor of the Canadian movement can only be explained, Lipset concludes, by a more sympathetic national value system. "As compared to her more populous neighbor, Canada is a more elitist, communitarian, statist, and particularistic (group oriented) society." Canada never had a liberal revolution. Its national existence, indeed, derives from its rejection of the American revolution. The clerically led French Canadians were equally impervious to the French revolution. The dominant Canadian tradition has been a kind of Tory paternalism which, as Henry Phelps Brown describes it, "stressed authority and hierarchy, but with these went solidarity and benevolence, which occupy some common ground with collectivism."

Although part of a North American movement, the Canadian unions historically showed a more collectivist bent, advocating state intervention when the AFL was preaching voluntarism, and, since the 1930s, providing the core support for the independent social democratic politics that has evolved with the New Democratic party. Differing value systems have different organizational outcomes, says Lipset. "The American social structure and values foster the free market and competitive individualism, an orientation which is not congruent with class consciousness, support of socialist or social democratic parties, or a strong trade union movement."[6]

Lipset's analysis is undeniably incomplete. Values for the most part do not have direct consequences, but are mediated through the many institutional and social/economic forces acting on trade unionism. And even where Lipset asserts a direct connection, much remains to be clarified.

While there may be a statistical correlation, for example, it does not necessarily follow that any real relationship exists between national approval ratings of labor unions and the proclivity of workers to vote for union representation in certification elections. Public opinion polls show a significant discrepancy between negative attitudes to unions as institutions and valuations of the need for unions—e.g., in the 56 percent affirmative responses to the statement: "If there were no unions, most employers would move quickly to exploit their employees."[7] The discrepancy suggests a conclusion different from that drawn by Lipset, namely, that workers do not have to like unions in principle in order to opt for them in practice.

Nor is it clear that worker preferences are the decisive factor. Union organizing expenditures, for one thing, have declined relative to the size of the nonunion sector. By most accounts (if not Lipset's), employer opposition has been highly effective, not only during representation campaigns, but also in resisting good-faith collective bargaining after unions have won representation elections. Less than two-thirds of first-time negotiations result in signed contracts. None of this, moreover, takes account of the rate of attrition of

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the trade union base as industrial plants close and the service sector expands. The AFL-CIO estimated in 1983 that it had to organize over a million new workers each year just to stay even.[8]

Much of the complexity of the organizing process clearly has not been captured in Lipset's analysis. But there is still no escaping the force of his thesis. At some fundamental level, the crisis of American trade unionism derives from the dubious regard in which it is held by the larger society.

There are no obvious ways to change this. Labor's tendency, doubtless more reflexive than calculated, to try to regain the moral high ground by taking on the Americanist coloration of its adversaries—for example, by its embrace of anti-immigration nativism in the 1890s, or by Gompers's strident patriotism during World War I, or, to some degree, by the militant anti-communism of the Cold War era—has never paid off. The Vietnam war twenty years ago, and Central America today, cost the AFL-CIO heavily among its friends without discernibly altering its public standing or even, indeed, making any dent on the Reagan administration's anti-unionism.

The labor movement can perhaps do a better public-relations job explaining how its activities advance the cause of social justice in the country. But if Lipset is right, collectivist values are no longer in the ascendant. And, in any event, organized labor can lay less claim to the social-justice mantle today than it could in the Roosevelt, or even the Johnson, era. As a pure-and-simple movement, labor has the least leeway when its power is eroding and its membership declining. This was true in 1929, when it seemed to many critics no more than "a life raft . . . for skilled labor," and is equally true today. Thirty years after expelling the International Brotherhood of Teamsters on grounds of corruption, the AFL-CIO has readmitted that most powerful and unrepentant of American unions. The federation is prepared to accept a storm of public criticism. "We ought to try to have a good image," commented one AFL-CIO official, "but give me a choice between the role of public opinion and the role of increased power, and I'll take the power." That, in marvelously succinct form, is the voice of pure-and-simple unionism under duress.

There is always, of course, the possibility that the larger environment will shift once more. On October 19, 1987, the stock market crashed; 22 percent of its value vanished in a single day. At the AFL-CIO convention a week later, a reporter hears, amidst anxious talk about an economic contraction, some hope "that the collapse in stock prices would call into question the individualist ethos of the Reagan era and create an environment far more sympathetic to the labor movement's insistence on the importance of social solidarity." Time will tell. But, if the bounds of constraint do shift—as they did in an earlier Great Depression—they seem unlikely to break. The United States is not Canada; and it is not Australia. □

Notes

[1] Seymour M. Lipset, "Labor Unions in the Public Mind," in Lipset, ed., *Unions in Transition: Entering the Second Century* (San Francisco, California, 1986), pp. 287–322.

[2] For instructive reading on this point, see the edition of Gompers's papers now being published. Stuart B. Kaufman, ed., *The Samuel Gompers Papers* (Urbana, Illinois, 1986). The first two volumes, covering the period 1850–1890, have appeared.

[3] "North American Labor Movements: A Comparative Perspective," in Lipset, ed., *Unions in Transition*, pp. 421–52.

[4] The most recent estimates by Leo Troy are closer to 15 percent, *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 23, 1987).

[5] Lipset, "North American Labor Movements," pp. 432–33.

[6] Quotations in Lipset, pp. 442, 443, 452. For other illuminating essays on Canada and the United States, see Christopher Huxley, *et al.*, "Is Canada's Experience 'Especially Instructive'?" in Lipset, *Unions in Transition*, pp. 113–32; and Noah M. Meltz, "Labor Movements in Canada and the United States," in Thomas Kochan, ed., *Challenges and Choices Facing American Labor* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985), pp. 315–34.

[7] Lipset, "Labor Unions in the Public Mind," p. 300.

[8] See, e.g., Richard B. Freeman, "Why Are Unions Faring Badly in NLRB Elections?" in Kochan, ed., *Challenges and Choices*, pp. 45–65, and "Discussion," pp. 67–71; John J. Lawler and Robin West, "Impact of Union Avoidance Strategy in Representation Elections," *Industrial Relations*, 24 (Fall 1985), pp. 406–20; William T. Dickens, "The Effect of Company Campaigns on Certification Elections," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 36 (July 1983), pp. 560–75.

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Bogdan Denitch

YUGOSLAVIA: THE LIMITS OF REFORM

Economic Crisis, Nationalism, Inner Strife

Mass popular and nationalist demonstrations throughout the Republic of Serbia, an inflation reaching over 230 percent, faltering economic performance, and growing public acrimony within the ruling party, the League of Communists (LCY)—these are a few symptoms of the current crisis in Yugoslavia, a country with an active and contentious press and highly visible and critical intellectuals.

For those who want to speculate about the outer limits of possible change in the one-party communist regimes, Yugoslavia can be seen as a case study regarding the limits of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. There are three areas in which Yugoslavia has pioneered in reforms. It was the first to introduce the concept of a market economy linked to the world market and combined with workers' self-management and, less willingly, the right of workers to strike. It has gone the furthest in decentralizing the state and providing for genuine autonomy for its national groups. And probably most significantly, it has gone the furthest in opening the ruling party to internal debate and, willy-nilly, a kind of pluralism.

The most important problem lying behind the current reforms in Communist societies is how to break the monopoly of party control over the economy, society, and the state. Without that break, it is unlikely that economic reforms can succeed. Economic reforms will require sacrifices, and the ruling party no longer has the ability to mobilize or bully sufficient public support for these sacrifices unless it enters into a partnership with other social and political forces. The question is, which forces? Short of multiparty democracy, there are three possible choices. The first candidate for partnership is the technical and managerial intelligentsia, efficiency-oriented and enthusiastic about the modernization of the economy, which it sees promising an improvement in its economic and social status. It is the least demanding group politically, but the social cost of such an alliance is great, since it would increase the class divide and the workers' resentments. The second possible candidate is populist nationalism, where the party comes forward as the defender of the nation. This formula has been used in Poland and is currently favored in the Baltic Republics, Hungary, and Serbia. The danger here is that forces may be unleashed that historically have turned out to be hard to control and often antidemocratic. The third, the most difficult and most promising, I would call the social-democratic option. It requires an alliance with the more skilled and active workers and technicians and the democratic intelligentsia. The "cost" here is the establishment of genuine unions controlled by workers and a state based on legality, with an increasing number of autonomous social groups and movements. It requires a conscious decision by the party to share power and responsibility. Without such a sharing, no basic economic and social reforms are really possible. In Yugoslavia all three options are being tried, in different republics.

Yugoslavia is also the only country in Eastern Europe where major criticism and

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discontent are still expressed within an explicit socialist framework. Socialism and democracy are on the agenda of many intellectuals, academic experts, and large sections of the membership—even, in some cases, the leadership—of the League of Communists. Most of Yugoslavia's intellectuals, including most democratic and socialist critics of the regime, believe that the road to reform and democratization runs in good part through the party rather than outside and against it. Most of what remains of the old *Praxis* circle and various democratic or humanist-Marxist groupings still talk in terms of a democratic federal Yugoslav state based on social ownership and self-management. They are more skeptical about the place of the market under socialism than the official LCY and government spokesmen. They may object to current economic policies; they may—as did parts of the public and legal press—call for the resignation of the prime minister and the entire Cabinet. But they accept the basic foundations of the system: a highly decentralized form of federalism, workers' self-management combined with a basically socially owned market economy, and nonalignment. What they reject is the party's continued monopoly of power.

There are at least eight "factions" in the League of Communists at any given moment based on the powerful autonomous party organizations of the republics and provinces. This power is all the more real since these units reflect the multinational character of the state and are not mere administrative units. In addition, there are three or four "cross-cutting" political "tendencies" or currents; liberal technocrats, hard-line traditionalists, populist nationalists, democratic pluralists, etc., are all expressing themselves through the press and media, in a contentious debate about the Yugoslav system. The local party leaderships of the republics argue publicly for alternative policies. In essence, the Yugoslavs do not accept a monolithic party, even theoretically. They do accept the reality of, disagreements and competing interest that have to be negotiated in political life.

One cannot yet, for example, form legal and open factions within the LCY. But stormy sessions of the Central Committee in the largest republic, Serbia, are held on television. This practice of televising sessions of the leading League bodies was extended to the Central Committee in October 1988. While it may bore people, it does open political infighting to public scrutiny. The defeated group (faction?) is no longer obliged to retreat after losing a vote. In addition to the sharp differences among the republic parties, there are public journals that polemicize violently with each other. And these polemics spill over into the mass media. Of course, this does not mean that the local sections of the LCY are themselves internally democratic. The degree of democracy varies enormously from republic to republic and within the republics, but there is a publicly acknowledged wide and open diversity of views within the League of Communists.

Liberalization and Democratization

When discussing reforms in communist one-party political states it is important to distinguish between liberalization and democratization. The first, acceptable to new middle classes and technocratic elites as well as to the more modern sections of the party leadership, is taking place in Poland, Hungary, and in the Soviet Union. It often comes from the top down, although sometimes it is a response to existing or anticipated pressures from below. The second, democratization, is a far messier, more turbulent, and contested process. The first presupposes the maintenance of the party monopoly, a sort of communism with a human face; the second presupposes independent unions and social movements as a step toward party pluralism. Both require major moves toward legality and a civil society independent of party and state.

During the struggle for democratization people are more likely to be jailed than under the classic one-party dictatorship since the boundaries of acceptable dissent are continually challenged, tested, expanded. Further, the forces that come to the surface during the opening up of a society are not by any means only or even most often those that favor more democracy. In the Soviet Union greater tolerance brought a Great Russian nationalist and hard-line faction into public life as well as a

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rebirth of Armenian and other nationalisms. In Poland traditional anti-Semitism has reappeared. In Yugoslavia mass rallies in Serbia are heavily influenced by a nationalism which calls for repressive action against the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Democratization is the battleground for a civil society and a legal social order.

The Yugoslav economy is in very deep trouble: hardly any growth in the national product since 1980, an inflation rate of over 100 percent for three years in a row, continued decline of living standards, and growing unemployment among the young. It is not clear how much of the trouble is the result of bad decisions made by Yugoslav leaders or the result of an unfavorable international economic climate since the oil shock of 1973. In either case, there is a need for drastic measures.

One problem is that the medicine prescribed by the federal government with the approval of the World Bank and other Western creditors constitutes a political disaster for any popular government. The standard World Bank formula is to produce and export more while cutting down on social spending and the real wages of workers. Exporting more in an era of growing protectionism in both the European Community and the United States is increasingly difficult, especially since Yugoslavia's Third World customers are over their heads in debt and unable to pay for past orders. Cutting the living standard of workers is hard to achieve, given the already low standard in most of southern Yugoslavia. And since this is occurring in the context of an expanding democratization, protests and strikes will also continue to expand.

The cumbersome federal structure, a system based on a consensus among the political elites of the six republics and two provinces, makes it almost impossible to take unpleasant and difficult actions. Yet this structure accurately reflects the distribution of power in a multiethnic state with vast differences in tradition, history, economic development, and political culture. Unfortunately, it also means that no institution or elected body can be effectively held responsible for mistakes in economic decisions and allocations. No one's career is jeopardized by error—which in turn leads to considerable cynicism about the official appeals for more responsibility. Those appeals become ever less effective as grotesque waste and inefficiency come to light in an increasingly independent press. This is one reason for the disturbing national populist demonstrations. This past summer major journals publicized the fact that in the middle of an economic crisis one hundred and sixty thousand cars, many with chauffeurs, are owned by the government and its bureaus! The upkeep of this monster car park and wages for personnel add up to just about the two billion dollars a year it takes to service the Yugoslav international debt. In the months following this exposé no one has denied the facts. The rage of workers who face wage cuts and read about this scandal can easily be imagined.

On the other hand, we should keep in mind that the system of self-management and decentralization that is commonly, and I believe mistakenly, blamed for the present economic mess works successfully in the developed northern Republic of Slovenia. It is also a system that has produced spectacular growth, matching that of Japan and South Korea, during the two and a half decades before the year of oil shock and world recession. We may then ask: Is self-management, combined with a market economy—that which is specific to the Yugoslav system—typical of the successful republics like Slovenia or of the unsuccessful ones like Macedonia? Is it because of or despite self-management and market socialism that Yugoslavia is in the present mess?

In my view, the cure for Yugoslavia's ills is more, not less, self-management and above all more, and not less, democratization. That must include the removal of the constant nonlegal, informal, but ever-present, interference in the economy and in decision making of self-managed enterprises by the local and republic party elites.

Another problem that bedevils Yugoslav and indeed all East European reformers is the tendency to apply abstract norms to proposals on how to run economies. Thus we are given absurd counterpositions: plan or market, rigid

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egalitarianism or the dolce vita of the West, complete dismembering of the federal central agencies of the state or rigid centralism, etc. Alex Nove's *The Economics of a Feasible Socialism* represents an excellent antidote to the usual dogmas about the place of plan and market. Nove argues that a properly organized socialist economy should be a combination of centralized planning, self-management, regionally owned public enterprises, cooperatives, and a small-scale private sector. The decision on which form of public or private ownership to opt for should be based not on abstract principles but on the nature of a given activity.

Presumably in Yugoslavia this could mean that the railroads, post, and telegraph would be run federally as public utilities; the banks and power companies as public utilities by the republics; the plants as self-managed and publicly owned enterprises; smaller plants and workshops and, above all, many services as cooperatives or privately owned businesses. A fair and universally applied tax structure would prevent excessive accumulations of wealth, particularly with powerful inheritance taxes to stop the entrenchment of economic privilege. Independent trade unions run by workers themselves would protect general working-class economic interests, especially above the enterprise level; and an autonomous network of enterprise committees with freely elected shop stewards would defend workers in the plants and run strikes when necessary.

Of course, all such basic economic reforms have as their essential precondition the destruction of entrenched pockets of privilege enjoyed by the politocracy. For example, the greatest of all privileges is a large, modern house or apartment distributed through political channels and generally not a result of mere "income differences." Although substantial economic differences do exist, they also existed—and in far worse form—during the harsh orthodox period immediately after the Second World War. It is therefore mere demagoguery to say, as do politicians from the less developed parts of Yugoslavia, that the present privileges and social differences are the product of democratization and decentralization. The privileges simply are more visible today.

The Yugoslavia press writes about the privileges of the political elites with a freedom that could not have been imagined during Tito's lifetime. Also, it is no longer just the political elite that now enjoys privileges. There is a growing middle and professional class not dependent on politics for its income and status. This group is not the creation of market socialism so much as of greater prosperity and a consequent division of labor. On the other hand, there are no capitalists. Soccer stars and pop singers can be individually wealthy, but no enterprise with more than fifteen workers can be owned privately, and joint ventures must still have workers' councils and trade unions. This may be one reason Western capital has not rushed to establish joint ventures in Yugoslavia.

To improve the economy, the small-scale private sector in Yugoslavia should be expanded considerably, above all in the field of crafts and services, since it is in services that socially owned enterprises have proved so inadequate. Not only is the small private sector not a base for the restoration of a capitalist class, it is clear that a popular check on those who control the public sector is necessary. This is particularly true since those who hold power through the manipulation or intimidation of the elected bodies of the workers' councils, are invariably linked with the party structures.

Many critics, both inside and outside the system, believe that the Yugoslavia today probably has less centralized planning than might be useful. The republics have not yet worked out effective mechanisms for joint economic policies when there are political disagreements pitting one republic against another. Or, put another way: The real political subjects of the Yugoslav Federation are the republics and their political elites as well as the official mass organizations rather than either the citizens or "cross-cutting" autonomous institutions of the working class.

Bedeviled by Nationalism

The Yugoslav revolution was successful in good part because the Communist-led Parti-

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sans, unlike their civil-war opponents, accepted the fact that theirs was a multi-ethnic society and proceeded to organize the postwar federation on that basis. The major Yugoslav national groups each have their own republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to the six republics there are two autonomous provinces within the Republic of Serbia—Vojvodina in the north with a Hungarian minority of some 25 percent and Kosovo in the south with an Albanian majority of close to 85 percent. The provinces are in most political respects equal to the republics. Extensive efforts are made to maintain an equality of the languages. The top federal positions of the state and the LCY are filled through rotation among the republics and provinces. This system represents the federal units, not the citizens as individuals. The only genuine federal institution is the Yugoslav

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army. In the present intrarepublic disputes, the army has remained apart.

The current national problems are found in two historically unpredictable places and one, alas, that is all too predictable. The predictable place, and the problem which makes the most stout-hearted optimist quail, is Kosovo. The unpredictable places are Slovenia and Serbia—that is, Serbia proper, without the two autonomous provinces. I must here be brief and oversimplify a very complex situation.

Slovenia is the most advanced and prosperous republic. It has less than 2 percent unemployment in contrast to the Yugoslav average of over 14 percent, and close to one-tenth of its workforce consists of immigrant workers from the less prosperous southern republics. The presence of these immigrant workers, who are often Moslem, poorly educated, and speak Serbo-Croatian, has spurred Slovenian nationalist resentment because the Slovenes are a small and prosperous nation of less than two million out of twenty-four million in Yugoslavia.

Popular resentment in Slovenia has also been fueled by the general assumption that their republic pays an unfair share of the federal budget and that those funds are systematically mismanaged by the local political leaders in the less developed regions. Nor does it help that these same leaders keep attacking Slovenia for its greater tolerance of social movements, political opposition, and a somewhat countercultural and activist LCY youth organization. As a result Slovenian public opinion is defensive about its special role, which includes both greater democracy than the rest of Yugoslavia and a growing intolerance toward uncultured "southerners." The federal bias against raw material producers and high import duties on manufacturing has subsidized the Slovene economy. But, since that subsidy is invisible while their contribution to federal funds for the underdeveloped regions is very visible, Slovene public opinion regards its republic as a victim of the present Yugoslav economy and political system.

The Slovenian LCY youth organization, through its lively journal, *Mladina*, has been attacking sacred cows, including the arm, and the revolution itself. At this moment it is the cutting edge of the struggle for civil society and civil liberties in the country as a whole. As a consequence, it was the target of a trial last summer in which a noncommissioned army officer and three journalists were charged with handling secret army documents. Slovenian resentment was intensified by the fact that the army insisted on holding the trial in Serbo-Croatian in the capital of Slovenia. Sentences were imposed ranging from six months to three years, and this outraged democratic public opinion everywhere in Yugoslavia. It is important to note that in Slovenia democratic protests and alternative movements are backed by both the government and the party.

Serbia is a more complicated case. Traditionally the center of the more liberal-minded political elites in the LCY, it is the one republic whose nationalism might be fatal for the survival of the federation. Serbs are the largest national group in the federation (almost 40 percent) and also the largest group in the army officer cadre. Since the revolution it has been one of the least nationalistic areas if for no other reason than that its nationalism has tended to be Jacobin, that is, democratic and centralist. But there have been potential nationalist problems, one of them the fact that the Serb population is divided among four republics and two provinces. But then no republic is ethnically homogeneous, and the Croatians are also distributed through three or four federal units. In the past, this led to minor nationalist unhappiness, mostly among writers. But in the last few decades the major disputes in Serbia have been between the dominant "liberals" in the LCY leadership, the democrats inside and outside the League, on one hand, and the LCY hardliners, on the other.

The recent history of the Province of Kosovo has led to a fundamental realignment of politics in Serbia and the growth of a dangerous populist and officially sanctioned nationalism. It is focused mostly on the defense of fellow nationals against the intolerable pressure of the Albanian majority in Kosovo. The swing toward populist nationalism has included the active support of many previous radical democratic and socialist critics of the LCY in Belgrade. The demonstrations in Serbia combine an explosive mix of egalitarian economic

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demands with a national assertiveness that frightens the more advanced republics. In effect, the struggle for further democratization is being held hostage to a reborn Serbian nationalism that, in turn, is mesmerized by Kosovo, now charged with a symbolism so powerful it seems impermeable to any rational solution. But one cannot have a police regime in Kosovo and democratization in Belgrade.

If Serbia is complicated, Kosovo is tragic. Everything about that region, from its history to its present situation, is tragic. It is the cradle of Serbian nationalism, the battleground where the medieval Serbian kingdom was conquered by the Turks, ushering in almost five hundred years of Turkish (Moslem) rule over the Balkans. It is the region with the most important monuments of Serbian medieval culture. Kosovo has become, in Serbia, an emotional equivalent to a combination of Northern Ireland and the Wailing Wall. But it is also an area in which modern Albanian nationalism was born in the nineteenth century and where a huge Albanian majority deserves the same degree of self-determination as the other Yugoslav national groups.

Although Kosovo has received the lion's share of federal and republic economic aid for decades, it has fallen steadily behind the rest of Yugoslavia. Poor as it is (and its per capita income is one-sixth that of Slovenia), it is still better off than Albania. That does not help, since the Kosovars quite properly compare their living standard not with a country they do not live in, but with that of the country in which they do live. Unemployment and underdevelopment led to nationalist demonstrations in 1981, which were repressed with massive arrests that left the province smoldering.

Kosovo and Yugoslavia are fated to remain together. Yugoslavia must solve the problem, for Kosovo is a demographic time bomb. Consider: As a concession to their constitutional rights, the Albanians in Kosovo complete their education in their own language, a language understood by no one outside their ethnic group. As a matter of pride, young Albanians have been refusing to learn even a minimum of Serbo-Croatian, the language spoken by eighteen out of twenty-four million Yugoslavs. The result is that they are locked into a self-made economic ghetto. Albanians in Kosovo have the highest birthrate in Europe.

Because the Albanians are both heavily rural and overwhelmingly Moslem, they resist birth control and the emancipation of women. Attempts to enforce Yugoslav laws are regarded as an assault on Albanian culture and religion. Unless women are taken into the work-force, the birthrate will continue to explode and a larger pool of better educated and bitter unemployed young people will be created. In any case, funds for the effective development of Kosovo are simply not available, and without a drastic reduction of the birthrate, they would do little good. All of this has to be solved without enraging the Serbs, who believe that historically Kosovo is theirs and, with considerable validity, that their conationals are being driven out of Kosovo by pressure from the Albanian majority. And it all has to be done without outraging the Slovenes and Croats, who would have to pay for a considerable part of the economic bill. Last but not the least, all this has to be done through a consensual political system where individual republics can veto unacceptable measures.

If this reminds *Dissent* readers of the tangled mess on the West Bank, it should come as no surprise that nationalist Serbian intellectuals formed the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Association this year!

What Will the Party Tolerate?

The Yugoslav League of Communists today leaves large areas of civic and cultural life outside of its direction and concentrates on the few crucial political matters where it tries to maintain firm control. Thus, Yugoslav authorities, for example, permit a gay disco club in the capital of Slovenia; the sale of journals like the *Economist, Time, Newsweek* and also *Playboy*, in the major cities; the translation of numerous anti- and non-Marxist social scientists; and the publication of the collected works of Trotsky. Violent polemics take place among economists about appropriate economic programs and theory. Heretical books are published on historical materialism, "decadent"

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and nonobjective art and poetry have their place. At the same time, Yugoslavia has an average of four hundred political prisoners at any given time. This creates a curious situation. The society, which is by all evidence the freest in Eastern Europe since it permits three things unheard of in that area—freedom of travel abroad, the right to strike, and the right of workers to remove managers of enterprises—has more political prisoners than the more repressive Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia. The critical point here is that it shows that the party can permit a certain amount of autonomy in the civil society, culture, and economy yet retain political power. Given a degree of decentralization and an explicit recognition by the party that it does not run everything, every challenge to authority is not automatically a challenge to state power.

Strikes in Yugoslavia, for example, are not illegal. They are covered in the press and more often than not win at least some demands. Most strikes are wildcat, usually against the local government or against decisions of the central workers' council. However, this year there have been massive workers' demonstrations outside the Parliament attacking the policy of austerity. They represent a reaction to the pressures from Yugoslavia's creditors for economic policies that lower the living standards and attack job security. According to Dr. Stipe Suvar, the president of the collective presidency of the League of Communists, to apply the criteria of economic efficiency to the Yugoslav economy would require dismissing two million out of eight million employed! These pressures are particularly explosive in a context where political and economic elites are making no equivalent material sacrifices.

Powerful autonomous social movements exist, primarily in the north. Mass demonstrations and petitions have stopped the construction of a nuclear power center near Zadar, and the federal legislature has voted to phase out nuclear power within a decade despite sharp objections from the government. Well-known dissidents like Milovan Djilas travel, get published, are interviewed in at least the youth press, speak publicly, and appear on television. The government prosecutors repeatedly lose censorship cases in courts; they also sometimes win. In any case, such cases no longer have predictable outcomes.

Whether one agrees with the inparty reformers or the critics outside the party, it is clear that the road to a reformed and democratic socialism lies at least in part through the League of Communists. It is within the League that much of the battle toward firming up a civil society and for a genuinely pluralistic society will be fought. Unless the party "hards" carry out a currently unimaginable coup with the help of the military, Yugoslavia will continue to evolve toward a more pluralist state. It also has more of a possibility of evolving to a democratic and socialist polity than any East European state. By a socialist polity I mean a society in which the working class (in which I include both the traditional and the new working class) controls the means of production and distribution through its democratic control of the state. In such a society, the major role of the state would involve planning on a macroeconomic level, and the demands of the people, however varied, would be democratically fought out in a political arena with alternative policies available.

Whether Yugoslavia will soon evolve into a society with a plurality of parties is less certain. Multiparty competition is a ways down the road, but there will be open tendencies in the party and contested elections through the broad front, the Socialist Alliance. Legal and constitutional protection for free debate and the organization of autonomous social movements, including alternative trade unions, are foreseeable in the near future. The questions central to a pluralist polity and democratic socialism are being posed openly, ever more urgently, even acrimoniously in public debates. □

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Paul Berman

INTELLECTUALS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

What's Happened Since the Sixties?

The year of the stock market crash, 1987, was also the year of the intellectual crisis. Afterward the stock market seemed to right itself, but that can't be said about the world of thought. Intellectual crises tend to be that way. Disorientation is never momentary.

The intellectual crisis has been amazingly widespread. The debates over curriculum at Stanford and Duke universities, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind,* E. D. Hirsch, Jr.'s *Cultural Literacy* with its famous list of five thousand items every educated person is supposed to know—these show the crisis merely in its American pedagogical form. The debate in France over Martin Heidegger and his Nazi enthusiasms (conducted in an endless number of books and articles), along with the debate in this country over Paul de Man, reveals a deeper philosophical version of the same crisis, since the sudden worry about Nazi backgrounds bespeaks, I think, a loss of confidence in several of the main ideas that pass as most "advanced."

Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals,** Alain Finkielkraut's *La défaite de la pensée,* Bernard-Henri Lévi's *L'Eloge des intellectuels*—these express the crisis as experienced by a younger generation of writers who can't help fearing that intellectual life is grinding to a halt. There was a book that came out in England in 1986, J. G. Merquior's *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Thought,* which laid out aspects of the debate unobtrusively in advance. And still another book, Alain Renaut and Luc Ferry's *La pensée 68,* caused a stir earlier that same year and foretold much of what has now happened.

Intellectual crises are never easy to describe. Unlike stock crashes, they have no material manifestation. Book-buying doesn't diminish during an intellectual crisis; on the contrary. The whole event tends to be subjective, which is to say, it varies according to authorial predilection. Among the writers cited above, Russell Jacoby's predilection is Marxism, whereas Bloom's, if you read him closely, is pre-Periclean monarchy. Jacoby understands the crisis as a triumph of the academy, Bloom as its defeat. On the other hand, if many subjectivities yield an objectivity, one element of the crisis can reasonably be declared a fact. All of the American authors, left, right, and liberal, plus all of the French authors I have named, agree that the crisis had its origin in radical trends of the 1960s. Ferry and Renaut even specify a month: May 1968. What began then has either run out of steam, or never had any steam, or has gone off track. At least that is what everyone who succeeded in publishing a book seems to think.

Intellectual crises take place in the land of hyperbole, e.g., "God is dead," "The End of Ideology," "The Closing of the American Mind," "*La défaite de la pensée.*" By definition, no bombast, no crisis. This makes for still another difficulty in identifying what is

* *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe.* New York: Basic Books, 1987. 290 pp., $18.95.

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happening today. Hyperbole is easily laughed off. Anyone who wants to dismiss arguments about an intellectual crisis need only demonstrate hyperbole's difference from simple reportage, and the arguments appear to sink. That may have happened a little too quickly in the reception given to Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals*. Jacoby's way of describing the crisis is to announce a break in the chain of intellectual inheritance in America. "Where is the younger intellectual generation?" he wants to know. "Leading younger critics? sociologists? historians? philosophers? psychologists? Who are they? Where are they?"

They are nowhere, says Jacoby. The heirs to Edmund Wilson or to Lewis Mumford or to a figure like C. Wright Mills, whom Jacoby regards as a great sociologist, don't exist, and things have come to a very sorry pass indeed, with no sign of getting better.

Now, as reportage, that is a vulnerable claim, not to mention an irritating one. Jacoby says he has asked his friends to identify the younger writers and they can't think of any, and the possibility will arise in the minds of many readers that Jacoby's friends must live in California. For humble though they be, younger critics, sociologists, historians, political writers, doctrinal polemicists, and columnists do exist. These younger intellectuals publish prominently. They read each other's work. They nod hello twice a year. Something exists and Jacoby ought to have taken the trouble to identify it correctly, if only to sharpen his denunciation.

He can't do it. It's a shame. His eye stops at all the wrong places. A reader of *The Last Intellectuals* might conclude that a publication called *Telos* stands at the center of contemporary life. Journals that are not obscure—conservative, but especially liberal—almost disappear from his survey. Even the *New Republic*, Edmund Wilson's old home—the *Neuro* he used to call it—a very influential magazine, barely rates mention. Inconveniently for Jacoby's thesis, the *Neuro* is written and edited largely by members of the supposedly missing generation, who turn out not to be missing at all but, oddly enough, visibly prolific. And if Jacoby doesn't see this, how can we take his denunciations seriously?

Peculiar judgments fly every which way from his pages. He holds up political radicalism as a central obligation for intellectuals and then offers an idiosyncratic theory about Jewish intellectuals having been less firmly attached to their radicalism than bony WASP intellectuals. Who are these resolute WASPs? Among Jacoby's heroes from the older generation is Gore Vidal, the gentleman-crank. Possibly Jacoby feels drawn for some reason to the gentleman-crank style, which is, perhaps, more of a WASP than a Jewish style. Wilson had a bit of gentleman-crank in him—though he was a serious man of ideas, which can't be said of Vidal.

Anyway, what is this radicalism that resolute WASPs so stoutly champion? Jacoby never quite says. He admires the Fidelista writers; he actually praises the apology by C. Wright Mills for the Castro dictatorship; but then, some of his radical heroes are genuine libertarians, too, not that he discusses anything so relevant as dictatorship versus liberty. And if you add up these omissions and commissions, as Jacoby's critics have done, and factor in the admiration for Vidal and the empty spot where the *New Republic* should be, the details begin to weigh, and *The Last Intellectuals* begins to take on water, and then—but this is the danger—his argument sinks with a fearsome glub before your eyes.

Hyperbole's difference from simple reportage consists, however, in being bigger. The little specifics of past and present may get away from Jacoby, but around these specifics glows hyperbole's larger truth. I'll have to describe this truth in my own way. The business of the intellectuals, let us say, is to get up a discussion of how to live, what to feel, what to think. Discussions like that are hard to arrange. The participants have to share values, assumptions, purposes, at least sufficiently to allow for conversation. The participants have to form a group, even a squabbling group. If they don't, everyone will go baying each in his own corner and no one will make sense. Or else the participants will drift into groups that already existed when they came on the scene, discus-

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sion will be routine; and their own contribution will come off as slightly artificial.

Every generation produces critics and writers in the different fields of intellectual life—as even Jacoby acknowledges in a couple of sensible passages. But the intellectuals of every generation don't organize a group. Events have to organize it for them—big events, the size of the First World War, preferably. Because with an event like that, the young writers come home from driving ambulances to discover that they no longer think and feel the way people thought and felt before, and the young writers can understand one another because of this, and have something new to say. It was the same during the Great Depression, and doubtless it was that way, too, for the writers who came of age during the Second World War.

Jacoby's generation, the people now in their thirties and forties, went through an earthquake like that. It was the revolution of the 1960s. But—here the larger truth comes up from the waves—for some reason their experience didn't translate into a serious discussion. The bright and accomplished intellectuals from the younger generation—the people whose bylines Jacoby doesn't know or doesn't respect—never quite organized a group. We have younger conservatives today, and younger liberals, and we have critics who sway back and forth according to what magazine assignment they receive. But the odor of experience is not on these younger writers, except in a few cases. The new tone that might have been expected from the younger generation, half-utopian, half-crushed, light and heavy at the same time, the radical shift that might have emerged, the maturation of student revolution into an intelligent intellectual life, the elaboration of what seemed twenty years ago to be great new inspirations—none of that, or not much, has come to pass.

Where are the intellectuals whose work does still reflect what was unique about the younger generation? That is the pertinent question, and Jacoby has given the answer. There are thousands of these people. But they are not old-fashioned intellectuals. They are, most of them, in the academy. They embrace narrow disciplines. They specialize. They write in jargon. Naturally some of them succeed in escaping the academic vices. The younger social historians, jewels of their generation, have produced brilliant volumes of social history—even if Jacoby, hobbled by his own discipline of hyperbology, won't acknowledge their achievement. Doubtless a tiny honor roll of exceptions to the rule could be assembled from other disciplines, too. But taking the academic radicals as a whole, Jacoby's assertion of mass disappearance is true enough. It is an astonishing thing. It is, in fact, a tragedy. The academic radicals have performed tremendous labors, yet the product of these efforts, the work of several varieties of university Marxists, of elegant deconstructionists, Foucaultians, Lacanians, structuralists, interpreters of the Frankfurt School, the criticism written by earnest people who regard someone named F. Jameson as a major literary figure, the harvest, all in all, of a leftwing academic generation—this product, vast, flat, infertile, dry, has the look of a Soviet wheat disaster.

It is a land of stubble. And whatever the flaws in Jacoby's survey, he was right, he was very brave, to stand up and say louder and more forcefully than any radical before him what conservatives have been saying with hypocritical glee for many years but radicals haven't wanted to concede. It may even be that *The Last Intellectuals* will prove historic. For if the subject of the sixties and its intellectual upshot has at least been broached from an honest standpoint that isn't seeking ideological advantage, maybe a serious discussion can finally begin, in English, without disciplinary guidelines.

What caused the remarkable march into the academy? Jacoby invokes "the economic winds that propel cultural life, and at times chill it." These winds have whittled away the traditional bases of independent intellectual life. Freelance writers make less money than before. Newspapers have shut down. Above all, the demise of modern cities has squeezed out the old bohemian districts that in the past created environments congenial to writers. As a result, intellectually minded people who grew up in the sixties had no alternative but to seek careers

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as professors, where they inevitably succumbed to academic values and ideas, especially the idea of ruthlessly rising through the departmental hierarchies.

I'm in no position to evaluate what Jacoby says about the corrupting aspects of academic life, though I'm ready to believe anything, especially remarks as modest as his. But his points about bohemia and the prospects for free-lance intellectual work I can judge. The points are not foolish. In the twentieth century the center of intellectual activity has always been New York, and New York has become ever less hospitable to the kind of penury in which intellectuals must normally live. The process has been going on for sixty or seventy years. Edmund Wilson noticed the first stage in his Greenwich Village novel of 1929, *I Thought of Daisy*: "I did not know that I was soon to see the whole quarter fall a victim to the landlords and the real estate speculators, who would raise the rents and wreck the old houses." Then the speculators ruined the next quarter and the quarter after that.

Lately the situation has been aggravated by a second stage that Jacoby, as a Marxist, will surely acknowledge. That is the decline of the urban working class. New York bohemia existed in the past as a kind of adjunct to the proletariat. The bohemian neighborhoods were merely the eccentric parts of the old tenement and pretenement districts. Today the "economic winds" have blown the working class largely out of the city. The old neighborhoods have either risen into bourgeois splendor or sunk into lumpen squalor, and either way are no longer suitable for bohemian life. Aside from housing, the New York working class used to maintain a considerable intellectual culture, mostly in the left-wing parties. Many of the older intellectuals whose radicalism Jacoby thinks proved unreliable, plus some of the people whose radicalism never faltered, grew up in that environment. And this, too, has disappeared along with the class itself and the old streets and the affordable rents and the institutions that affordable rents allowed to flourish. A distressing situation.

But can this distressing situation explain what Jacoby wishes it to explain? The same urban conditions afflict people in the performing arts even more severely. Actors and musicians lose their careers entirely if they move far away, which is not the case with writers. There is no modem for the saxophone. And sure enough, the performing arts do suffer. Cultural historians of the future will not look kindly on the way America has let real estate speculators trample over what is best about New York. Even so, the performing arts haven't collapsed altogether. Is that because performing artists are more likely than intellectuals to come from wealthy backgrounds and can afford high rents? The opposite is more likely: performing artists feel less horrified than intellectuals at accepting the proletarian occupations that still survive. You see this in the strangely Thespian demeanor of Manhattan shopclerks, waiters, and taxi drivers.

The same distressing conditions afflict writers who did not flee into the corrupting embrace of the academy—the people who became old-fashioned intellectuals despite the rumors of their demise—the journalists, the contributors to the conservative magazines. The latter group sometimes benefits from the golden vaults of the right-wing think tanks. But the others have a hard time of it. I think their troubles may surpass those of predecessor generations, leaving aside writers from extremely oppressed circumstances. I know talented young writers who publish frequently and yet still bounce around from sublet to sublet without ever finding an affordable apartment of their own. A miserable way to live. Yet the distressing conditions haven't driven these people into paying equally expensive graduate school tuitions. Nor is it impossible to get into print. Jacoby complains that the *New York Review of Books* has failed to bring along a younger generation of writers, which may be true, though less and less. Even if it were true completely, surely there are other journals, more today than anybody could possibly read. Cities around the country still have radical weeklies with mass circulations and these weeklies are happy to publish young writers, the younger and more radical, the better. Conditions at these places are exploitative. But to find opportunities to learn how to

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write, to publish your views—that can be done. As for learned or scholarly journals, these have become a threat to the ecology. It is said that two thousand four hundred articles on sociology are published every year. (Of course, that may be part of the problem.)

The "economic winds" exist. But do they really "propel cultural life"? I don't think they propel the intellectuals—short of "in the last instance." If large numbers of people who came up in the New Left never took an interest in becoming old-fashioned intellectuals, if they became professors instead and undertook to write in jargon on topics an inch wide, if they abandoned playing a public role, I think the social factors merely smoothed the way. Ultimately these people made their own choice. No one herded the academic radicals into the universities. On the contrary: terrific efforts were expended at herding them out, and continue to be expended. The academic radicals entered because they wouldn't be stopped from entering. They wrote in jargon because they insisted on it. They became unintelligible because they believed that unintelligibility is profundity. They liked narrow topics. They thought they were making the revolution.

It's a pity Jacoby doesn't address himself to these beliefs. He might have been expected to. In a very intelligent earlier book, *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism*, he expounded on differences between "scientific Hegelianism" and "historical Hegelianism." Scientific Hegelianism results in a crude logic of determinism. Jacoby criticized this logic mercilessly. Crude determinism is bad. Historical Hegelianism leads to a sophisticated Marxist subjectivism. Sophisticated subjectivism is good. "Men do not make history just as they please, but they make their own history," Rosa Luxemburg said. But in *The Last Intellectuals*, though Jacoby echoes her maxim, writers don't make their own history. Landlords, tenure committees, and editors make the history.

Maybe that's what it was like in the Marxist thinking that came out of the sixties. In *La pensée 68*, Ferry and Renaut criticize Pierre Bourdieu, the sociologist, for following the same procedure in his own study of the intellectuals, *Homo Academicus*. Ferry and Renaut complain that Bourdieu foreswore vulgar Marxism in his introduction, then set about showing how French intellectuals express the larger social forces nonetheless. Jacoby goes further, actually, since the poor American professors that he belabors in *The Last Intellectuals* don't even get to express social forces. They merely get kicked around by them, like pebbles.

How to explain the radical professors, then? I think we have to put the economic winds to the side and look instead at the history of ideas in the sixties. That means recalling why the radicals became radical to begin with, and what their radicalism became.

Here is a rough sketch of a historical explanation. It begins by reversing Jacoby's question. He asks: Why hasn't the younger generation produced a lively intellectual life the way that older generations did? The question in reverse comes out: Why didn't the older generation produce heirs? What happened in the sixties that prevented the work of older writers (including writers who were fairly young at the time) from inspiring imitators, followers, critics, and detractors who would have formed an equivalent to the generations that came out of the thirties and the Second World War?

The answer should be obvious. The Second World War generation emerged from their youth ebullient in victory, perhaps a little exhausted, fearful of totalitarian dangers, confident in the values of liberal humanism for which the war had been fought. But by the middle sixties, each of these feelings had taken on a false quality. The victory had aroused hopes that were greater than the postwar achievements, which in the eyes of a younger generation that didn't experience the war, made the ebullience look hypocritical. The fear of totalitarian dangers became less and less realistic, more and more paranoid, producing ultimately the delusionary perceptions that led Americans into Vietnam. The confidence in liberal humanism seemed grotesque given the greatest of the postwar events, which wasn't the battle against totalitarianism but the global

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movement for decolonization. Ideas like democracy, human rights, and the freedom of the individual were mobilized precisely in order to maintain the continuity of imperial power. And the result was, by the middle sixties, that liberal humanism had in large measure lost the ability to make sensible judgments about its own performance.

Or possibly there was more to the generation gap than that. Possibly a gigantic underground shift had occurred from a culture of hardship to a culture of consumption. Possibly the successes of liberal humanism had proved so great that the old doctrines could no longer contain them. In any event, if there is an intellectual crisis today, there was also one in the middle sixties, a feeling that things had fallen apart, which on the part of the student generation took the form of revulsion against liberal humanism and its style. Jacoby may have forgotten this atmosphere when he regrets today the failure of that same generation to produce equivalents of Wilson or Dwight Macdonald. Yet these elderly figures were *New Yorker* writers. They were liberal humanists themselves, even if with some radical points of view. *New Yorker* writers had about as much chance as Frank Sinatra to articulate emotions of the middle and late sixties. The whole purpose of rebellion on the part of the student generation was to oppose people like that.

The young radicals followed other examples, European ones mainly, usually at the distance of five or ten years. New Left heroes of the late sixties were, as Jacoby recalls, writers of the fifties and early sixties—Sartre, Camus, Fanon, Marcuse, Deutscher, Reich. Then the radicals started flooding the graduate schools. Camus and the existentialism of Sartre disappeared, and what dominated instead was Althusserian Marxism, E. P. Thompson Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, structuralism, the Frankfurt School, deconstruction later on, and so forth. The Thompson Marxists among graduate students were in the humanist tradition and therefore different from the others (and some of the younger historians, as I say, have continued to follow their own course, as has Thompson). But leaving the humanists aside and allowing for inconsistencies and exceptions on all sides, the various doctrines can be boiled down to a single grand metaphysic, which came to influence almost everyone in the left-wing graduate school environment. The metaphysic contained two fundamental points, plus a posture.

The fundamental points were: (1) What you see in front of you—for instance, a democracy, or the plot in a novel, or whatever—is an illusion. Reality is undecipherable, or else decipherable only with the aid of science. (2) Those who say otherwise do so because of who they are, not because of what they see. Who they are is probably a self-interested exploiter. Naturally, these points are expressed in different ways by each of the doctrines. Point One—the illusory quality of what lies before you—might, for instance, be stated in a semiotic or deconstructionist way (the distinction between signifier and signified, the impossibility of affixing a meaning), in a Freudian way (the governing role of the unconscious), in a Marxist way (the dominance of bourgeois culture), or in a structuralist way (the governing role of anthropological structures). In any case, the posture that followed from Points One and Two was the Great Refusal, the posture of absolute rejection, of final rupture with everything soft and humanist and subjective that had been thought before.

Were the two points absurd? No, they were an obvious place to begin criticizing smugness and blather. But the posture of the Great Refusal required turning these points into systems. And then, well: On the matter of writing style, for instance, it's obvious that any system of thought affirming the illusory quality of the visible world is going to exact consequences. The ordinary literary virtues of lucidity and straightforwardness do not seem like virtues to someone who regards the obvious world as an illusion. The philosophers of the sixties accordingly developed writing styles that were opaque, enigmatic, paradoxical, scientific-sounding, and complex. They refused to use simple narrative techniques, they abhorred old-fashioned lucidity. Ferry and Renaut mock these writers as "philosophists" and are dry about the results: "The philosophists of the sixties achieved their greatest

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success in managing to accustom their readers and listeners to the belief that incomprehensibility is the sign of grandeur." And five or ten years later, when incomprehensibility reached American shores, the consequences were, of course, even woolier. For bad writing in French is sometimes good. But in English, bad is worse. Not to mention inspirations from the German!

Point Two in the grand metaphysic—the idea that anyone who claims to see reality is doing so in order to dominate someone else—was at bottom a criticism of reason and the Enlightenment. Here again, the point could be expressed according to different systems. Foucault's version derived from Nietzsche. Foucault saw a link between rationality and repression. He argued that the development of reason in the seventeenth century led to persecution of the insane. The very idea of sanity began to look dubious from a Foucaultian perspective, as if words like sane and insane were mere conveniences of definition, brought into currency by the social need to dominate and exclude.

Alternatively, the criticism might derive from Marx, as in the work of Horkheimer and Adorno. There was Marcuse's famous argument that democracy's most obvious virtues, for instance, freedom of speech, are actually the hidden workings of bourgeois control. Or the criticism of the Enlightenment might derive from linguistics via Lévi-Strauss and structuralist anthropology. Lévi-Strauss argued that, since the same structures of belief underlie all cultures, no "better" or "worse" can be identified in comparing one culture with another. There is no "enlightened" versus "unenlightened"—except in the eyes of imperialists. The only barbarism, from this point of view, is the belief that there is barbarism.

Altogether stupid, these contentions? They offered sharp criticisms of abusive uses to which Enlightenment ideas had been put. Did we rain bombs on the peasants of Indochina? It was, after all, love of democracy that supposedly made us do it. Criticizing such a claim was an appropriate first reaction to the politics of the post–Second World War period. The anticolonialist ideas that derived from Lévi-Strauss were particularly powerful. On the other hand, if criticism of the Enlightenment was extended to mean that democracy and human rights are merely Western anthropological curiosities, what would prevent structuralist anticolonialism from turning into a defense of the most reactionary Third World dictatorships? If the only barbarism is the idea of barbarism, how can we identify any barbarism other than our own? If we are not the partisans of Enlightenment, what is to prevent us from becoming the partisans of every kind of obscurantism, especially when the obscurantists raise the flag of anticolonial resistance? On what basis, as Alain Finkielkraut asks, can even the most savage of customs be condemned?

The criticisms of reason and the Enlightenment spread into a criticism of all kinds of evaluation. If sanity isn't necessarily superior to insanity, if one culture cannot be said to be more advanced in important respects to another, can literature be said to have superior and inferior expressions? Can high culture be regarded as more serious or important than low or popular culture? These questions were likewise worth raising. The postwar era was a period of genius in certain popular arts, for instance, in black America popular music and its imitators; but it was a period also of snobbism among critics, who managed not to see these obvious achievements. The critical ideas that derived from structuralism and other doctrines of the sixties made a great battering ram for clearing away all kinds of snobbism and prejudice that obstructed genuine critical appreciation.

But when criticism of the Enlightenment had at last gone beyond countering the foolish and snobbish to become a thorough system in itself, what was to prevent tin-eared music critics from claiming, say, that a Duke Ellington on one side and a heavy-metal rock band on the other are really all on a plane? What would prevent professors from supposing that value in literature is merely an illusion fomented by the dominant class and end up teaching their students to feel content with reading Louis L'Amour, narrator for the masses? What was to prevent naive students from demanding, instead of an education, courses that would

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merely congratulate them on their ethnic background?

In short, what was to prevent the valuable and progressive criticisms of imperialism, snobbism, and prejudice from becoming reactionary defenses of tyranny abroad and ignorance at home? The criticism of liberal humanism, having turned into a systematic extreme, produced everything necessary for a thorough intellectual collapse—the collapse of lucidity and sense, the loss of the ability to distinguish the important from the ephemeral, the collapse also of leftism, in whose good name some of the fatuous claims were made. Even television came to be extolled. The defense of the masses thus evolved into a defense of the popular-culture exploiters of the masses. Finally, the whole enterprise caved in, and above the rubble hovered the dust of pretension that always hovers when earnest Americans try to imitate the French or the Germans.

What is to be done? Having said all this, I hate to invoke still other French writers as an alternative. But on a principle of fighting fire with fire, I note that in France, a countermovement has begun among younger intellectuals who are calling, in effect, for a rehabilitation of liberal humanism, suitably updated. I've cited Ferry and Renaut, the authors of *La pensée 68*, and Alain Finkielkraut, who wrote *La défaite de la pensée*. Another writer from the same group is Pascal Bruckner, whose criticism of Third Worldism in France, *The Tears of the White Man*, has come out in English with a valuable introduction by the translator, William Beer, applying Bruckner's strictures to American attitudes.* The writers haven't received much press in the United States, and even less that is favorable. There's a tendency to compare them to the great masters of the sixties and be disappointed. They are not, in truth, great masters (though Finkielkraut in particular is very talented). But as one critic has observed, they're doing a fine job of dismantling the great masters. Anyone who reads their books will see how many of their ideas I've borrowed, not necessarily in ways they would applaud.

Do the various American books and articles constitute a parallel effort on this side of the Atlantic? Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* raises questions about the influence of Heidegger that were raised a year earlier by Ferry and Renaut. Points of similarity to the French writers do exist. Bloom, though, is in the grip of cranky Straussian philosophical doctrines. He adopts the posture of a nattering curmudgeon and ends up grounding his arguments on a reactionary dislike for the reforms of the sixties. There's no future in Bloom, only a past. Jacoby, as the anti-Bloom, adopts an ultraradical sixties posture of the Great Refusal. This too is exasperating. But Jacoby has succeeded in focusing our attention on the method of criticism. As someone has said, the method of tailors is to sew a jacket, a shirt, a collar. The method of criticism is to stand up when occasion requires and say about a given body of work: Well, it's not wearing a jacket. It's not wearing a shirt. If you look carefully there's not even a collar. . . .

In that way and no other way the task of clarification goes on. □

* Pascal Bruckner, *The Tears of the White Man: Compassion as Contempt*. New York: The Free Press, 1986. 244 pp. $17.95.

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Peter Mandler

THE "DOUBLE LIFE" IN ACADEMIA

Political Commitment and/or Objective Scholarship?

Some thirty years ago in these pages, William L. Neumann registered an eloquent protest against the acquiescence of American academics to the conservative temper of their time. "Today's American historian probably reflects his age more completely than in any previous generation," he wrote. "American historical writing . . . embodies the prosperity, the conventionality and the nationalist emphasis of the Truman-Eisenhower years."

Three decades later, we are neck-deep in another period of complacency, conventionality, and nationalism, but fortunately the academy has *not* conformed as supinely as it once did (though it has by no means been immune to the general rightward drift). But this modest display of independence is not to everyone's liking. To some, like Stephen Balch and Herbert London, it is evidence that "the American campus is now the nesting place for a significant population of political extremists . . . the campus has probably become American extremism's principal address." Instead of obediently shuffling rightward, "the spectrum of respectable opinion" in the academy has shifted "further and further to the Left."

Only the neoconservatives could transmute a mild resistance to prevailing ideological winds into a latter-day Gunpowder Plot. Desperately casting about to find *some* beds still infested with Reds, neoconservative journals have in the last few years launched their own "unremitting attack" on the elite institutions of American higher education. Recently this neoconservative counterattack has taken organizational form in the modestly titled National Association of Scholars, which aims to win back control of the academy from the "barbarians" of the Class of 1968. I want here to examine their critique of the academy, a critique that appears in virtually interchangeable articles in *Commentary*, the *New Criterion*, *Society*, and the *American Scholar*.[1]

In 1984, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching asked five thousand teachers in two- and four-year American colleges about their political views. A bell-curve distribution resulted: 5.8 percent "left," 33.8 percent "liberal," 26.6 percent "middle-of-the-road," 29.6 percent "moderately conservative," and 4.2 percent "strongly conservative." Belying the notion that since the late 1960s the New Left has institutionalized itself in the academy, these figures represent a perceptible shift to the right from a similar study undertaken in 1969.[2]

It will be interesting to see how the National Association of Scholars—its founding conference described by the *New York Times* (November 15, 1988) as "more typical of a political rally than of an academic conference"—will negotiate this paradox.

Yet neoconservative intellectuals have allowed themselves to be traumatized by these figures. Seizing on the fine print of the data, they could still find confirmation for some of their worst fears. The proportion of "left" faculty, 5.8 percent nationally, was found to rise to 6.3 percent when research universities alone were considered and to 6.7 percent at four-year liberal arts colleges. Examination of specific disciplines within these elite institutions revealed powerful concentrations: 10.2 percent in English literature, 19.8 percent in history, 21.7 percent in philosophy, and 37 percent in sociology. At the very top of the

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scale, at the Ivies and comparable institutions outside the Northeast, Norman Cantor extrapolated, "at least 50% of the best minds are now committed to [Marxist and neo-Marxist] ideologies, and among scholars below the age of 40, 75% are so committed."

This can amount to an academy "in danger" only if you share the most peculiar neoconservative obsessions. First, you must accept Cantor's very broad definition of a Marxist, so broad as to include my colleague Lawrence Stone, the historian, whose last known political commitment was to Gary Hart. Similarly, you must consider all ideological systems that have come after Marxism, in response to its *failures*—like structuralism and poststructuralism—to be "post-Marxism" or "neo-Marxism" and cast them into the same circle of Hell. Then you must share the odd view that the study of the humanities in elite institutions like the Ivies is an essential bulwark of social cohesion, while disregarding the sharper shift to the right in the places where most Americans are educated.

But leave these cavils aside and consider the neoconservatives' chief concern, that is, the virulence of the New Left. It's not so much the quantitative as the qualitative threat of the New Left in the academy that troubles the neoconservatives. Graduates of the Class of 1968 are finally turning out their "big books," their tickets to tenure, and with the power and confidence that tenure endows they are extending their tendrils into the Establishment. This new-found power is allowing them to change the rules of the game and to perpetuate their hegemony long after their historical moment has passed. In the future, tenure will be granted not to the superior minds, but to the politically "correct." Radicals "press for hiring scholars who share their outlook" and are "more sure than traditional liberals that those who are not good radicals are not very smart and do not deserve tenure track appointments" (Rothman, 6).

Dramatic cases of political perversion stalk the pages of neocon journals: Maoist Barbara Foley challenges her weak-kneed liberal colleagues at the University of Chicago to tenure her; trendy administrators try to cram women's studies down the craws of unwilling Kenyon College students; the study of literature at Yale has been "hijacked" by "philosophic terrorists"; the history departments at Princeton and New York University have been "taken over by the Marxists and their radical feminist allies."

In these maneuvers the radicals are assisted by that old right-wing bugaboo, the "national media," who give "rave reviews" to any old piece of radical rubbish and thus allow pseudointellectuals to "develop national reputations on the basis of work that would once have been dismissed as frivolous at best." Naturally, the superior minds are demoralized by this kind of corruption, and they avoid academic careers.

In the neocon fantasy, this is not just a generational turnover; it is a once-and-for-all transformation of intellectual life. Universities are being gradually converted "from open forums for the examination of ideas into organizations with established ideological lines." Research is no longer about the search for truth: "the methods of scholarly inquiry, the level of intellectual discourse, and simple standards of honesty have gradually been degraded to accommodate ideological ends." And "the distinction between teaching and indoctrination altogether evaporates."

Again, simply on the surface of things, this scenario is preposterous. If there are more radicals in the academy today than twenty years ago—and the Carnegie study suggests there are not—it cannot be attributed to a well-organized conspiracy. No one wins tenure at an elite institution for publishing in the *Radical History Review* or the *Insurgent Sociologist*; indeed, Peter Dreier lost a celebrated tenure battle at the Tufts Sociology Department, it is said, for publishing in far less controversial journals like *Social Policy*. Nor did Barbara Foley win tenure at Chicago. The Dreier case, over which left-leaning faculty at Tufts seemed split, also illustrates the complete *inability* of the New Left to organize conspiracies and corruptions—an incapacity one would have thought was abundantly illustrated in the 1960s. A far better organized—and far more successful—ideological campaign was mobilized *from the right* against a young historian, David Abraham, a Marxist who did not get tenure at "Marxist" Princeton and who (thanks to intensive lobby-

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ing by prominent anti-Marxists) has now been driven out of the profession altogether.

As for the muddling of truth and ideology, teaching and indoctrination, the Carnegie Foundation report suggests that liberal views about the place of politics in the university are probably as strong as ever. Only about a quarter of all academics polled thought that their colleagues' teaching and research even "reflected" their politics. Over half agreed that scholarship should not consider social implications. When asked which goals were most important for undergraduate teaching, faculty mentioned "tolerance of diversity" most often, and 90 percent mentioned "competence in mathematics" and "appreciation of literature and the arts."

The neoconservatives pretend to be defenders of the liberal ideals traditionally associated with academic freedom. Universities should be "open forums for the examination of ideas," says Balch (p. 13); knowledge should be considered as "always tentative, subject to falsification through the acquisition of new evidence, and never to be cloaked in the garb of definitive pronouncements" (Balch and London, 48). But there is another ideal of the academy more or less explicit in neoconservatism.

What *should* universities teach? Balch and London hold out for

> the ideals of Western civilization . . . the study of classics of political theory or world literature . . . the deposited wisdom of civilization. . . .
>
> A study of ancient Greece was a study of life, not a preachment or conversion; but the highest ideals of that civilization carry their own persuasiveness, and are the precursors of our own.

In my own field, history, the tasks are clear: "the restoration of reason to history," reason being defined by Gertrude Himmelfarb as "the rational ordering of society by means of constitutions, political institutions, and laws." But, to another neoconservative, history is

> the endless dismal accountings of frustration, fragmentation, and loss that make up the record of organized social life. . . . [o]nly those conditioned by limited expectations of human capability can be satisfied by limited achievements, and such people are not, by definition, radical. (Nuechterlein)

So the "open forum" should not include radicals? No, for "by its very nature, radical scholarship can only be a caricature of the real thing." Why? Because, "as a species of utopian delusion, it is unable to withstand rigorous, scholarly scrutiny." How then do we get rid of the radicals while still preserving an "open forum"? Surreptitiously. "In the old days," rhapsodizes Joseph Epstein,

> one can imagine a strong English-department chairman, in the approved English-professor manner, taking Prof. X aside to say, "Look here, X, do be a good fellow and forget that rot about the bourgeois attitudes of the New England writers I understand you are teaching. . . ." If Prof. X were tenured, the request would be a friendly one; if he were not yet tenured, the request would no doubt be more insistent.

To be sure, "in the old days" radicals would not get even as far as an untenured post. "When I was a graduate student at Princeton in the early Fifties," fondly remembers Norman Cantor, "one of my fellow students turned out to be a Marxist. He was forced to leave." Ah, "the old days."

For Hilton Kramer, the golden age is not the 1950s or even the 1920s, but the 1820s. Sir Walter Scott—"fortunate man!"—"lived in a tidier and more fastidious intellectual universe than ours," whereas today "there are many worse disasters to be visited upon the life of culture than the *Edinburgh Review*." In the *New York Times Magazine*, Colin Campbell sings of a time when the Yale English department "resemble[d] a sort of English country estate. . . . Everything was in order."

Today the culture is disordered, cluttered with bad dissenters, and the deep, silent contemplation of thinkers is shattered by what Joseph Epstein calls "the contemporary noise": women's liberation, mid-life crisis, sexual identity. So it turns out that the open forum should not be very open at all. This is not just crankiness or hypocrisy on the part of the neoconservatives (though they are not short of those commodities): it is a sign of the central dilemma of neoconservative thought.

Nothing worries the neoconservatives more than the damage done to the social and cultural fabric by unrestrained individualism. In an odd deviation from their usual boosterism, they see

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this problem as a fault line running back to our Puritan forebears, who bequeathed to American society a vision of "Adamic innocence" and unreasonably "high expectations about human and institutional perfectibility." But the problem of excessive individualism has been aggravated disastrously since the Second World War by the rise of a new professional middle class, even more detached from realism than the old bourgeoisie. Within this new class, the least responsible of all are the *Luftmenschen* of the academy, itself described as "a kind of heaven for concepts that have slipped their earthly moorings."

So it's the academy that *is* the problem. Once again, the treason of the intellectuals, but compounded first by the vast extension of higher education and compounded again by the irresponsibility of the New Left. The neoconservatives, therefore, want badly to neutralize the academy, to cast out the ideologues (that is, the left-wing ones). This could be done by rolling back numbers and funding to 1950s levels, but the neoconservatives are too canny to swallow that political poison (though there is a taste of it in the creepy nostalgia for the "good old days"). Instead, they use code words to appeal to a liberal audience. All they want, they say, is to restore politeness and decorum, truth and objectivity. Forms of campus expression introduced in the 1960s—demonstrations, teach-ins, political rallies dressed up as educational "forums"—must be delegitimized. Space and resources must be provided so that individual inquiry can be pursued in contemplative silence, free from "the contemporary noise."

This is the neoconservative in the self-appointed role that Peter Steinfels has called the "counterintellectual": one whose duty it is to counteract the egoism and undiscipline of the intellectual while somehow remaining an intellectual oneself. The liberalism of the "counterintellectual" is almost entirely tactical. It is a *method* for restoring a more congenial political atmosphere, not a good in itself. Meanwhile, "open forums" should have carefully defined limits. They have to be policed, and the neoconservatives are bursting to offer themselves as policemen.

So neoconservatives find it difficult to confine themselves to the passivity of the "counterintellectual." Hailing from the new professional middle class themselves, they know that it is not possible simply to roll the academy back to the 1950s. They also understand that intellectual battles are now fought, more or less inevitably, on political (rather than, say, religious) terrain. It is a battle they want very much to fight. They want to turn the new class from a social corrosive into a social cement. To do so, they must not only appeal to the liberal ideals of the open forum and reasoned scholarship, but also insist upon limits to that forum and apply their own ideological understanding of "reason" to scholarship.

This paradox is the source of the schizophrenia evident in the neocon ideal of the university. The neoconservative as "counterintellectual" quietly defends the liberal values of free inquiry and the open forum; the neoconservative as ideological warrior strives noisily to exclude certain kinds of inquiry and to narrow the forum. The dilemma has been acknowledged by neoconservatives themselves. "We are faced with a paradox," Stanley Rothman writes in *Society*. "We cannot simply go about our business, for that leaves the field to the ideologues. On the other hand, insofar as we directly confront them, we contribute to some degree to the politicization of the university."

This schizophrenia can lead to some awful hypocrisies. On the whole, the neoconservatives stood fastidiously aside from the campaign against David Abraham, but they did nothing to stop it. Still, even the veneer of liberalism has had beneficial effects. Some neoconservatives have adopted another, more honorable response to schizophrenia—still no cure—by choosing to lead a double life. By day, they may work and teach peacefully in the university, as "counterintellectuals." By night (or on sabbatical), they devote themselves to ideological warfare through the neoconservative journals, think tanks, institutes, etc. There, free from distracting diversity, students, and "contemporary noise"—free also from the obligation to be polite and collegial—they can fire undiluted ideological salvos without harming liberal values.

It is not easy to live this double life. Some of the ideological institutions are actually housed

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within the liberal university, and the thin partitions separating them are easily breached. The Hoover Institution, in many ways an admirable neoconservative think tank, suffers from being a more-or-less organic part of Stanford University. (Stanford suffers from the Hoover Institution, too.) The double life is also psychologically taxing. If one is ranting and raving at night about the threat to liberties posed by classroom radicals, it is difficult to walk into the office in the morning and share a liberal cup of coffee with a Marxist colleague. One lives the double life, but the Marxists don't. One is still handicapped, and this is no Easter egg roll; for the neoconservatives, this is a struggle for Western civilization.

Those who have embraced the double life have at least acknowledged the difficulties of pursuing ideological commitments in the liberal forum of the university. Academic radicals tend to sweep aside the subject altogether, denying that a double life *could* be led, that scholarship and politics *could* be separated. There is no such thing, they say, as "value-free" scholarship, and the defense of "value-free" scholarship has generally served as a thin disguise for a defense of the political status quo. But that is a poor reason for dodging the question of how politics and scholarship *do* mix. Although a good deal of postmodern literary theory has been devoted to this question, it has been written in the language of its discipline and, as yet, has not contributed much to the general debate.

On that level, there is a great silence. No one wants a return to the slugfests of 1968, when the university was nothing *but* politics. No one, equally, wants a return to the monolithic academy of the 1950s, in which the discrete concerns of white upper-class males were embodied in "value-free" scholarship. But in between lies a huge area of ambiguity.

Although rarely articulating it, most radical academics respond in practice to this area of ambiguity by embracing a kind of ideological pluralism. They hold that academics should be encouraged to pursue their ideologically committed scholarship and teaching, whatever its coloration. Because of the great diversity available in American higher education, students will be exposed to a wide variety of positions and be able to choose for themselves. Scholarship, too, benefits from the free play of ideas, stripped as far as possible of stuffy, "value-free" conventions. There will be conservative journals and radical ones. Stanford will support the Hoover Institution, and the City University of New York the Socialist Scholars Conference.

As a wedge to break up the old, false consensus, ideological pluralism made a lot of sense. It asserted the claims of deprived social groups and the excluded parts of the ideological spectrum for a place at the academic table. It challenged the legitimacy of the old standards, but it is no basis for legitimating new ones. It is a cop-out, a refusal to make educational policy. The neoconservatives are right to complain that it fragments knowledge, confuses students, weakens the power of the teacher. Of course, the diffuseness of the modern university is not the *fault* of radicals; it has many other sources, not least the premium now placed on over- specialized research. Thus Harvard has a "core curriculum" that has no core. My own department does not teach a standard introductory history course because, in large part, we cannot agree on what should go into it. Instead we offer a smorgasbord, perplexing and delightful.

The neoconservative response to the vacuity of the coreless curriculum has been to fight a covert action in favor of the old canons and "value-free" social-science techniques of the unreconstructed academy. It is, at best, a fruitless struggle, trying to feed the generation of the 1990s on the stale and unnourishing food of the 1950s. But it attracts public attention because it does address fundamental questions about the role of the academy that academics—of all people!—have been reluctant to address for fear of reviving the warfare of the 1960s.

The neoconservative critique—for all its hysteria and hypocrisy—might, therefore, have something to teach us. First, it suggests that the truce that ideological pluralism represents is no longer tenable, that it is time to move on from the pedagogical resting place at which the academy has been stuck for too long. There is going to be a national debate about what universities should teach, and academics of the left cannot abstain from it. Why should they? Why not leap at a chance to make more

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coherent and consensual those changes in academic style and substance that have so quietly revolutionized the campus over the last generation? Why not articulate and justify the place of women's studies, cultural criticism, social and labor history, and historical sociology in a liberal education?

Participating in a public debate on the content of a liberal education will not be as safe or simple as the refuge of ideological pluralism. But academics never have been able to maintain in practice the arm's distance from colleagues that ideological pluralism demands. University teaching is, after all, one of the most collegial of professions. Academics are constantly being asked to judge their peers. The liberal academy reconciles people to these judgments by assuming that there is some kind of objective standard upon which everyone can rely. If you toss these objective standards overboard, academia will be plagued by patronage and corruption and, indeed, by the kind of internal strife from which neoconservatives want to protect the university. Unless some common discourse is restored among colleagues of widely diverging commitments, radical scholars will organize against conservatives within departments to hire "the best" (i.e., the best radical scholars), and vice versa.

Here is the second point that we should concede to the neoconservatives, who have at least raised the question of how ideological people should comport themselves in the academy. Their liberalism may be a mere tactic, but that is no reason to spurn liberalism ourselves. The double life—accepting that different standards of political behavior obtain inside and outside the university—has much to recommend it. As the Carnegie statistics suggest, many radical faculty already accept the double life in practice. They describe their teaching and scholarship as "critical," not always as "radical." They claim to teach their students not a dogma but a method: how to think for themselves. They are cheerfully open about their political views when for whatever reason these arise, but they do not insist that their politics should always be immediately visible in their work. They resist the left-wing *machismo* that insists upon colorful displays of political commitment at every possible opportunity. They do not shrink from speaking at demonstrations or teach-ins, but they understand the difference between this exercise of free speech and the kind of speaking they do in lectures and seminars. They try not to apply ideological criteria too explicitly to hiring searches. Although they do not like to think so, here they share some common ground with liberals and with neoconservatives, too. If we were all more frank about acknowledging this common ground, then we might be in a better position to engage in the common debate about the function and content of higher education, a debate that is inevitable. We might incidentally reduce some of the ideological pressure on the academy that the neoconservatives fear and that causes them to entertain lurid fantasies of *revanchism*, which causes them, that is, to violate the partitions of the double life. By helping them with their ambiguity, we would be helping ourselves with ours as well. □

Notes

[1] This article is based on an unscientific sampling of neoconservative literature on academic politics since 1980. The most important essays considered and cited are James Nuechterlein, "Radical Historians," *Commentary*, October 1980; Hilton Kramer, "A Note on the *New Criterion*," *New Criterion*, September 1982; Joseph Epstein, "Reviewing and Being Reviewed," *New Criterion*, December 1982; Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Denigrating the Rule of Reason," *Harper's*, April 1984; Norman Cantor, "The Real Crisis in the Humanities Today," *New Criterion*, June 1985 and letter to the *New Criterion*, December 1985; Frederick Crews, "Dialectical Immaterialism," *American Scholar*, Autumn 1985; Paul Hollander, "The Survival of the Adversary Culture," *Partisan Review* 53 (1986); Colin Campbell, "The Tyranny of the Yale Critics," *New York Times Magazine*, Feb. 9, 1986; Elizabeth Lilla, "Who's Afraid of Women's Studies?", *Commentary*, February 1986; Stephen H. Balch, "Radical Delusions," and Stanley Rothman, "Academics on the Left," *Society*, March/April 1986; Joseph Epstein, "A Case of Academic Freedom," *Commentary*, September 1986; Stephen H. Balch and Herbert I. London, "The Tenured Left," *Commentary*, October 1986.

[2] In a 1969 survey, 5 percent of academics characterized their politics as "left," 41 percent "liberal," 27 percent "middle-of-the-road," 25 percent "moderately conservative" and 3 percent "strongly conservative."

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Todd Gitlin

POSTMODERNISM: ROOTS AND POLITICS

What Are They Talking About?

Something must be at stake in the edgy debates circulating around and about something called postmodernism. What, then? Commentators pro, con, serious, fey, academic, and accessible seem agreed that something postmodern has happened, even if we are all (or virtually all) Mr. Jones who doesn't know what it is. (At times the critical world seems to divide between those who speak with assurance about what it is and those who are struggling to keep up.) The volume and pitch of the commentary and controversy seem to imply that something about this postmodern something *matters*. In the pages of art journals, popular and obscure, abundant passion flows on about passionlessness. It would be cute but glib and shortsighted to dismiss the talk as so much time-serving space-filling, the shoring up of positions for the sake of amassing theoretical property, or propriety, or priority. There is *anxiety* at work and at play here. I think it is reasonable, or at least interesting, to assume that the anxiety that surfaces in the course of the discussion—and I confess I share in it—is called for. A certain anxiety is entirely commensurate with what is at stake.

"Postmodernism" usually refers to a certain constellation of styles and tones in cultural works: pastiche; blankness; a sense of exhaustion; a mixture of levels, forms, styles; a relish for copies and repetition; a knowingness that dissolves commitment into irony; acute self-consciousness about the formal, constructed nature of the work; pleasure in the play of surfaces; a rejection of history. It is Michael Graves's Portland Building and Philip Johnson's AT&T, and hundreds of more or less skillful derivatives; it is photorealism, David Hockney, Rauschenberg's silkscreens, Warhol's multiple-image paintings and Brillo boxes, Larry Rivers's erasures and pseudo-pageantry, Sherrie Levine's photographs of "classic" photographs; it is Disneyland, Las Vegas, suburban strips, shopping malls, mirror glass facades, William Burroughs, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, Donald Barthelme, Monty Python, Don DeLillo, Isuzu "He's lying" commercials, *Star Wars,* Spalding Gray, David Byrne, Twyla Tharp, the Flying Karamazov Brothers, George Coates, the Kronos Quartet, Frederick Barthelme, Laurie Anderson, David Letterman, John Ashbery, Paul Auster, the Centre Pompidou, the Hyatt Regency, *The White Hotel, Less Than Zero,* Kathy Acker, Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* (but not *Portnoy's Complaint*), the epilogue to Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz;* it is Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Jean Baudrillard; it is bricolage fashion; it is news commentary cluing us in to the image-making and "positioning" strategies of the candidates; it is remote-control-equipped viewers "zapping" around the television dial.

To join the conversation I am going to use the term to refer to art located somewhere in this constellation. But I am also going to argue that what is at stake in the debate—and thus the root of the general anxiety—goes beyond art: it extends to the question of what sort of disposition toward the contemporary world is

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going to prevail throughout Western culture. Postmodernism in the arts corresponds to postmodernism in life, as sketched by the French theorist Jean-François Lyotard: "[o]ne listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo, and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong." The entire elusive phenomenon that has been categorized as postmodernism is best understood not just as a style but as a general orientation, as a way of apprehending and experiencing the world and our place, or placelessness, in it. (Just whose place or placelessness is at issue is an entirely legitimate question I shall return to.) Likewise, controversies about postmodernism—the whole of what inevitably has to be called "the postmodernism discourse"— are in no small part discussions about how to live, feel, think in a specific world, our own: a world in nuclear jeopardy; a world economically both alluring and nerveracking for the fitful middle classes; a world two decades from the hopes and desperate innocence of the sixties; a world unimpressed by the affirmative futurology of Marxism. Not for the first time, debates over cultural politics intersect with larger intellectual and political currents, prefiguring or tracing conflicts that have emerged, or ought to emerge, in the sphere of politics strictly understood. When the *Partisan Review* embraced modernism in the 1930s, for example, it took a position on more than style: it took a position on reason, the State, the (ir)rationality of history; finally, it drove a revisionary wedge into left-wing politics in the large. Postwar American versions of modernism, as artistic practice and critical exegesis, can also be understood as a way to inhabit a drastically changed political space.

I am going to take the position that the discussion of postmodernism is, *among other things,* a deflected and displaced discussion of the contours of political thought—in the largest sense—during the seventies and eighties. The aesthetics of postmodernism are situated, historical. The question is, What is postmodernism's relation to this historical moment, to its political possibilities and torments?

I want to broach some intersecting questions: What do we mean by postmodernism? Why has it come to pass? What is troubling about it? Finally, postmodern is pre-what? What is the relation between postmodern aesthetics and a possible politics?

What is Postmodernism?

Things must be made to look crystalline for a moment before complications set in. Here, then, is one person's grid—hopelessly crude, in the manner of first approximations—for distinguishing among premodernism (realism), modernism, and postmodernism. These are ideal types, mind you, not adequate descriptions. And they are not necessarily ideal types of the work "itself"; rather, of the work as it is understood and judged by some consensus (albeit shifting) of artists, critics, and audiences.

The premodernist work aspires to a unity of vision. It cherishes continuity, speaking with a single narrative voice or addressing a single visual center. It honors sequence and causality in time or space. Through the consecutive, the linear, it claims to represent reality. It may contain a critique of the established order, in the name of the obstructed ambitions of individuals; or it may uphold individuals as the embodiments of society at its best. In either event, individuals matter. The work observes, highlights, renders judgments, and exudes passions in their names. Standing apart from reality, the work aspires to an order of beauty, which, in a sense, judges reality. Lyrical forms, heightened speech, rhythm and rhyme, Renaissance perspective, and compositional "laws" go to work in the interest of beauty. Finally, the work may borrow stories or tunes from popular materials but it holds itself (and is held by its audience) above its origins; high culture holds the line against the popular.

The modernist work still aspires to unity, but this unity, if that is what it is, has been (is still being?) constructed, assembled from fragments, or shocks, or juxtapositions of difference. It shifts abruptly among a multiplicity of voices, perspectives, materials. Continuity is disrupted, and with enthusiasm: it is as if the work is punctuated with exclamation marks. The orders of conventional reality—inside versus outside, subject versus object, self

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versus other—are called into question. So are the hitherto self-enclosed orders of art: poetry vs. prose, painting vs. sculpture, representation vs. reality. The work is apocalyptic, often fused with a longing for some long-gone organic whole sometimes identified with a fascist present or future. The protagonist is not so much wholeheartedly opposed as estranged. Instead of passion, or alongside it, there is ambivalence toward the prevailing authorities. The work composes beauty out of discord. Aiming to bring into sharp relief the line between art and life, modernism appropriates selected shards of popular culture, quotes from them.

In the postmodernist sensibility, the search for unity has apparently been abandoned altogether. Instead we have textuality, a cultivation of surfaces endlessly referring to, ricocheting from, reverberating onto other surfaces. ("Surface is illusion but so is depth."—David Hockney.) The work calls attention to its arbitrariness, constructedness; it interrupts itself. Instead of a single center, there is pastiche, cultural recombination. Anything can be juxtaposed to anything else. Everything takes place in the present, "here," that is, nowhere in particular. Not only has the master voice dissolved, but any sense of loss is rendered deadpan. The work labors under no illusions: we are all deliberately playing, pretending here, get the point? There is a premium on copies; everything has been done. Shock, now routine, is greeted with the glazed stare of the absolute ironist. The implied subject is fragmented, unstable, even decomposed; it is finally nothing more than a crosshatch of discourses. Where there was passion or ambivalence, there is now a collapse of feeling, a blankness. Beauty, deprived of its power of criticism in an age of packaging, has been reduced to the decoration of reality, and so is crossed off the postmodernist agenda. Genres are spliced; so are cultural gradations. Dance can be built on Beach Boys songs (Twyla Tharp, "Deuce Coupe"); a circus can include cabaret jokes (Circus Oz); avant-garde music can include radio gospel (David Byrne and Brian Eno, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*). "High culture" doesn't so much quote from popular culture as blur into it.

All master styles aim to remake the history that precedes them, just as Eliot said individual talents reorder tradition. In one sense, then, postmodernism remakes the relation between premodernism and modernism: In the light of postmodern disdain for representational conventions, the continuity between the preceding stages comes to seem more striking than the chasm dividing them. Yet it is worth noticing that "postmodernist"—in the spirit of its recombinant enterprise—is a compound term. It is as if the very term had trouble establishing the originality of the concept. If the phenomenon were more clearly demarcated from its predecessor, it might have been able to stand, semantically, on its own feet. Instead, *post*-modernism defines the present cultural space as a sequel—as what it is not. Postmodernism is known by the company it succeeds. It shadows modernism. Modernism lurks in its sequel, haunts it. The very fact that a phenomenon is called "postmodernism"—that it differs from modernism by nothing more than a prefix—pays tribute to the power of modernism's cultural force field and suggests that postmodernism might be no more (or less) than an aftermath or a hiatus.

So what's new? It has been argued, with considerable force, that the lineaments of postmodernism are already present in one or another version of modernism, that postmodernism is simply the current incarnation, or phase, in a still unfolding modernism. Roger Shattuck, for example, has recently made the point that Cubism, Futurism, and artistic spiritualists like Kandinsky "shared one compositional principle: the juxtaposition of states of mind, of different times and places, of different points of view." Collage, montage: These are of the essence of modernism high and low. Then what is so special about (1) Philip Johnson's AT&T building, with its Chippendale pediment on high and quasi-classical columns below; (2) the Australian Circus Oz, which combines jugglers who comment on their juggling and crack political jokes along with (their list) "Aboriginal influences, vaudeville, Chinese acrobatics, Japanese martial arts, fireman's balances, Indonesian instruments and rhythms, video, Middle Eastern tunes, B-grade detective movies, modern dance, Irish jigs, and the

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ubiquitous present of corporate marketing"; (3) the student who walks into my office dressed in green jersey, orange skirt, and black tights?

Put it this way: Modernism tore up unity and postmodernism has been enjoying the shreds. Surely nothing is without precedent; surely modernism had to set asunder what postmodernism is mixing in and about. Modernism's multiplication of perspective led to postmodernism's utter dispersion of voices; modernist collage made possible postmodernist genre-splicing. The point is not only juxtaposition but its attitude. The quality of postmodern juxtaposition is distinct: There is a deliberate self-consciousness, a skating of the edge dividing irony from dismay or endorsement, which makes up a distinct cultural mood. Picasso, Boccioni, Tatlin, Pound, Joyce, Woolf in their various ways thundered and hungered. Their work was radiant with passion for a new world/work. Today's postmodernists are blasé; they've seen it all. They are bemused (though not necessarily by bemusement). The quality of deliberateness and the sense of exhaustion in the postmodern are what set it apart.

It might be objected that we are talking about nothing more than a fad. We read in a "Design Notebook" column in the *New York Times* of March 12, 1987, that "Post-Modernism Appears to Retreat." Apparently *Progressive Architecture* is no longer giving its awards to pastiches of columns, capitals, and cornices; the writer suggests that the popularization of the premium architectural style of the last ten years signals its uniformity, mediocrity, and impending end. Actually, postmodernism as a stylistic avant-garde movement in architecture had probably already reached a plateau (but does this mean it ended?) at the moment when photographs of Michael Graves's buildings were featured in the *New York Times Magazine*. But what is interesting about postmodernism goes beyond the fashion in architecture—for the recombinatory thrust, the blankness, the self-regarding irony, the play of surfaces, the self-referentiality and self-bemusement that characterize postmodernism are still very much with us. What is interesting is not a single set of architectural tropes but postmodernism as what Raymond Williams called a "structure of feeling"—an interlocking cultural complex, or what he called "a pattern of impulses, restraints, tones"—that forecasts the common future as it colors the common experience of a society just at or beneath the threshold of awareness. In this flickering half-light, postmodernism is significant because its amalgam of spirits has penetrated architecture, fiction, painting, poetry, planning, performance, music, television, and many other domains. It is one wing, at least, of the zeitgeist.

Why this Postmodernism?

If this is so, the interesting question is, Why? We can distinguish more or less five approaches to an answer. These are not at all necessarily incompatible. To the contrary: Several forces are converging to produce the postmodernist moment.

The first is the bleak Marxist account sketched with flair in a series of essays by Fredric Jameson. The postmodernist spirit, with its superseding of the problem of authenticity, belongs to, is coupled to, corresponds to, expresses—the relation is not altogether clear—the culture of multinational capitalism, in which capital, that infinitely transferable abstraction, has abolished particularity as such along with the coherent self in whom history, depth, and subjectivity unite. Authentic use value has been overcome by the universality of exchange value. The characteristic machine of this period is the computer, which enthrones (or fetishizes) the fragment, the "bit," and in the process places a premium on process and reproduction that is aped in postmodernist art. Surfaces meet surfaces in these postmodern forms because a new human nature—a human second nature—has formed to feel at home in a homeless world political economy.

Postmodernists ransack history for shards because there is no here here; because historical continuity is shattered by the permanent revolution that is capitalism (which, by the way, I find it clumsy and inconsistent to call "late capitalism," a formulation haunted by a peculiar nostalgia for sequential time—as if we could know whether it is late early, middle, or early late). Uprooted juxtaposition is how people live: not only displaced peasants cast

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into the megalopolis, where decontextualized images proliferate, but also TV viewers confronted with the interruptus of American television as well as financial honchos shifting bits of information and blips of capital around the world at will and high speed. Art expresses this abstract unity and vast, weightless indifference through its blank repetitions (think of Warhol or Philip Glass), its exhausted anti-romance, its I've-seen-it-all, striving, at best, for a kind of all-embracing surface that radiates from the world temple of the postmodern, the glorious Centre Pompidou in Paris.

A second stab at explanation calls attention to our political rather than strictly economic moment. In this light, the crucial location of the postmodern is *after the 1960s*. The postmodern is an aftermath, or a waiting game, because that is what we are living in: a prolonged cultural moment that is oddly weightless, shadowed by incomplete revolts, haunted by absences—a Counterreformation beating against an unfinished, indeed barely begun, Reformation. From this point of view, postmodernism rejects historical continuity and takes up residence somewhere beyond it because history *was* ruptured: by the Bomb-fueled vision of a possible material end of history; by Vietnam, by drugs, by youth revolts, by women's and gay movements; in general, by the erosion of that false and devastating universality embodied in the rule of the trinity of Father, Science, and State.

It was faith in a rule of progress under the sway of that trinity that had underlain our assumptions that the world displays linear order, historical sequence, and moral clarities. But cultural contradiction burst open the premises of the old cultural complex. The cultural upwellings and wildness of the sixties kicked out the props of a teetering moral structure, but the new house has not been built. The culture has not found a language for articulating the new understandings we are trying, haltingly, to live with. Postmodernism dispenses with moorings, then, because old certitudes have actually crumbled. It is straining to make the most of seriality, endless recirculation and repetition in the collective image warehouse, because so much of reality *is* serial. As Donald Barthelme's fiction knows, we live in a forest of images mass-produced and endlessly, alluringly empty. Individuality has become a parody of itself: another word for a fashion choice, a life-style compound, a talk-show self-advertisement logo. It might even be argued that postmodernism plays in and with surfaces because that is what it must do to carry on with its evasions: because there are large cultural terrors that broke into common consciousness in the sixties and there is no clear way to live out their implications in a conservative, contracting period.

From this point of view, postmodernism is blank because it wants to have its commodification and eat it. That is, it knows that the cultural industry will tailor virtually any cultural goods for the sake of sales; it also wants to display its knowingness, thereby demonstrating how superior it is to the trash market. Choose one: the resulting ironic spiral either mocks the game by playing it or plays it by mocking it. A knowing blankness results; how to decode it is a difficult matter. Take, for instance, the "Joe Isuzu" commercials in which the spokesman, a transparently slick version of the archetypal TV huckster, grossly lies about what the car will do, how much it costs, and so on, while the subtitles tell us he's lying, and by how much. The company takes for granted a culture of lies, then aims to ingratiate itself by mocking the conventions of the hard sell.

Or consider the early episodes of *Max Headroom* during the spring of 1987, which in nine weeks melted down from a blunt critique of television itself to a mishmash of adorability. "20 Minutes into the Future"—so the pilot film shows us—the computer-generated Max fights the tyranny of the ratings-crazed Network 23, whose decidedly sinister (shot from below with wide-angle lens) board-room tycoons will stop at no crime in their pursuit of profits. (Cherchez la japanoise: the venal Zik-Zak corporation that brings on the ratings panic is conveniently Japanese.) Is Max a revolutionary guerrilla or a sales gimmick? In the British prototype, he throws in with a revolution against Network 23; in the American version, the self-proclaimed revolutionaries are

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thuggish terrorists, as despicable as the Network bosses. In any event, Max in his early American weeks reaches out of the fictional frame to yawn in the face of ABC's impending commercials. As the weeks pass, however, Max loses his computerized bite and becomes regressively cuter. The same Max is marched forward to promote Coca-Cola over Pepsi, as if Coke were both subversive and mandatory (the "wave" to be "caught")—to an audience encouraged to laugh at the distinction and still, as consumers, act on it. Commerce incorporates popular cynicism and political unease while flattering the audience that it has now, at last, seen through all the sham: Cynicism, Inc., Mark Miller has named it. Andy Warhol would have grasped the point in a second, or fifteen.

A third approach to explaining postmodernism is a refinement of the second: an argument not about history in general but about a specific generation and class. Postmodernism appears as an outlook for (though not necessarily *by*) Yuppies—urban, professional products of the late baby boom, born in the late fifties and early sixties. Theirs is an experience of aftermath, privatization, weightlessness: They can remember political commitment but were not animated by it—more, they suspect it; it leads to trouble. They cannot remember a time before television, suburbs, shopping malls.* They are accustomed, therefore, to rapid cuts, discontinuities, breaches of attention, culture to be indulged and disdained at the same time. They grew up taking drugs, taking them for granted, but do not associate them with spirituality or the hunger for transcendence. Knowing indifference is their "structure of feeling"—thus a taste for cultural bricolage. They are, though, disabused of authority. The association of passion and politics rubs them the wrong way. Their idea of government is shadowed by Vietnam and Watergate. *Their* television runs through *Saturday Night Live* and MTV. Their mores lean toward the libertarian and, at least until the AIDS terror, the libertine. They like the idea of the free market as long as it promises them an endless accumulation of crafted goods, as in the (half-joking?) bumper sticker: "The One With the Most Toys Wins." The idea of public life—whether party participation or military intervention—fills them with weariness; the adventures that matter to them are adventures of private life. But they are not in any conventional sense "right-wing": They float beyond belief. The important thing is that their assemblage of "values" corresponds to their class biographies.

A fourth approach starts from the fact that postmodernism is specifically, though not exclusively, *American*. Andreas Huyssen makes an interesting argument that carries us partway but needs to be extended. Postmodernism couldn't have developed in Germany, because postwar Germans were too busy trying to reappropriate a suppressed modernism. Where it developed in France at all, it did so without antagonism to or rupture from modernism. But in America, the artistic avant-garde, in order to break from cold war orthodoxy and corporate-sponsored smugness, had to revolt against the officially enshrined modernism of the postwar period, had to smash the Modern Art idol. I would add the obvious: that postmodernism is born in the U. S. A. because juxtaposition is one of the things we do best. It is one of the defining currents of American culture, especially with Emancipation and the rise of immigration in the latter part of the nineteenth century. (The other principal current is the opposite: assimilation into standard American styles and myths.) Juxtaposition is the Strip, the shopping mall, the Galleria, Las Vegas; it is the marketplace jamboree, the divinely grotesque disorder, amazing diversity striving for reconciliation, the ethereal and ungrounded radiance of signs, the shimmer of the evanescent, the good-times beat of the tall tale meant to be simultaneously disbelieved and appreciated; it is vulgarized pluralism; it is the cultural logic of laissez-faire but perhaps, the suspicion arises, even more—of an elbows-out, noisy, jostling, bottom-up version of something that can pass as democracy. We are, central myths and homogenizations and oligopolies notwith-

* Cecelia Tichi argues that the blank-toned fiction of Ann Beattie, Bret Easton Ellis, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Tama Janowitz, among others, is the anesthetized expression of a TV-saturated generation.

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standing, an immigrant culture, less melting pot than grab bag, perennially replenished by aliens and their singular points of view. As long ago as 1916, Randolph Bourne wrote that "there is no distinctively American culture. It is apparently our lot rather to be a federation of cultures." Hollywood and the radio and TV networks flattened the culture, but there is still life in Bourne's vision. The postmodernist, from this point of view, is hitching high art to the raucous, disrespectful quality that accompanies American popular culture from its beginnings. And indeed, the essential contribution of postmodernist art is that it obliterates the line—or the brow—separating the high from the low. What could be more American?

Postmodernism and Poststructuralist Theory: Unstable Bedrock.

I want to lurch, in properly postmodern style, to the domain of high theory. For the forms of representation displayed in postmodernist art rhyme or dovetail with—extend? extenuate? correspond to?—a crisis of thought that runs throughout poststructuralist theory, what we could call a crisis of bottomlessness. The territory of theory and the territory of art share an intimacy greater than ordinary. Among the practitioners of postmodernism are peculiarly a generation schooled in poststructuralist theory: variously, Foucault, Baudrillard, Lacan, Derrida. Characteristically, it is critics who have named the phenomenon that the practitioners practice as they wriggle away from it, insisting in virtual chorus on their individual artistry.

All theoretical maps have empty spaces; there are things they cannot disclose, even acknowledge. I think of a graduate student I met in 1987. She presented herself as a committed feminist working the deconstructionist beat. She was partial to the notion that the world "is"—in quotation marks—everything that is agreed to be the case. Or as Lily Tomlin puts it, that reality is a widely shared hunch. The category of "lived experience" is, from this point of view, an atavistic concealment; what one "lives" is expressed as, constituted by, a layer of discourse that has no more—or less—standing than any other system of discourse. I asked her if she wasn't troubled by the fact that her politics was rooted in a decision to pursue the cues supplied by her experience as a woman, yet from the poststructuralist point of view her emotions were to be forbidden any primacy. Yes, she said, it bothered, chagrined, embarrassed her. As a feminist she was unwilling to make her commitments dissolve into ungrounded discourse. Yet as a theorist she was compelled to explode the very ground on which she stood as a political person—the very ground that had brought her to discourse theories in the first place.

This self-exploding quality is the fundamental anomaly for poststructural theories. One is drawn to a politics out of a complex of understandings and feelings—*moral* feelings. They crystallize into the Archimedean point, the unmoved and essential standing place, for one's intellectual project. Proceeding from that point, one tries to locate oneself in history. One employs a language of unmasking. Ideology, one comes to understand, freezes privilege and encases it in a spurious idea of the natural. Now one sets out to thaw the world, to show how the "natural" is situated, arbitrary, partial. Discourse, one discovers, is a means through which domination takes place. The dominated collaborate with the dominators when they take for granted their discourse and their definition of the situation.

We can only sympathize with the project. Yet discourse theories cannot account for the impulse from which the politics proceeded in the first place. Indeed, they hold, quite clearly, that such impulses should not be taken at face value. There *is* no human experience—at least none that deserves special treatment. It is discourse all the way down—analogous to postmodernism's endless play of surfaces. Poststructuralist critics generally agree that the concept of "literature," say, "assumes that something recognizable as human experience or human nature exists, aside from any form of words and from any form of society, and that this experience is put into words by an author"—thus Diane Macdonell, as if the idea that there is "human experience" were as dismissable as the idea that there is "human nature." But then the ideal of a way of thinking that liberates has been thrown—thrown *funda-*

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mentally—into question. What constitutes liberation, and who says? Who is entitled to say?

The impulse toward this sort of unmasking is certainly political: it stemmed from a desire to undo the hold of one system of knowledge/language/power over another. It followed from the sixties' revelation that various systems of knowledge were fundamentally implicated in injustice and violence—whether racist or sexist exclusions from literary canons or the language and science of militarism and imperial justification. But the poststructuralist move in theory has flushed the Archimedean point away with the sewage of discourse.

If there is one theorist whose work seems, at first, to be animated by the promise of the postmodern, it is Michel Foucault. Foucault's popularity today stems in good measure from the flair with which he engaged "the politics of the personal" in a succession of *tour de force* studies documenting the ways in which institutions (psychiatry, medicine, prisons, sexuality) are encrustations of power and assumptions. His insistence on the unavoidability and irreducibility of power relations—a revival of anarchist traditions long eclipsed by Marxism—was refreshing: it shattered any lingering idea that all oppression amounts, "ultimately," to that of capital over labor. It thereby appealed to academics desirous of a radical stance beyond Marxism.

But perhaps there is also something in his popularity that suggests a radicalism of gesture and not of action, suggests the paralysis of radical politics rather than the fruition of it. Alas, Foucault's work was interrupted. But the last phase to reverberate throughout the Anglo-American world, the phase that culminated in Volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality,* outlined a world of power that not only instigated resistance but required it, channeled it, and turned its energy back upon it. Power was everywhere, "micropower," strategies constantly "deploying" (to use the military language Foucault was partial to) against other strategies—apparently without a basis for solidarity or a reason to support resistance against power. Against Enlightenment ideas of universal rationality, serving to justify the suppression of those found wanting in rationality, Foucault constituted a considerable advance: an anticolonial respect for the principle of human diversity. But as universalist structures were swept away, something essential was left wanting. As Foucault said to a group of us in Berkeley in November 1983, "There is no universal criteri[on] which permits [us] to say, This category of power relations [is] bad and those are good"—although Foucault the person had no trouble taking political positions. Why support some resistances and not others? He could or would not say. As we pressed him to articulate the ground of his positions, he took refuge in exasperated modesty—there was no general principle at stake and no substantial lacuna for his system (which was not, after all, intended to be "a system"). Altogether too easy. A theoretical nihilism, then, is a fair charge to level against the discourse move; it is the equivalent of the blank stare of the postmodern. What, in short, is the ethical basis for politics?

As the ontological bedrock shakes, nostalgia will return for the old unmoved movers—the unbudgeable signified, the true, the essential, the godly. How tempting it will be, for example, to regress to a labor theory of value, a notion of labor-power as human essence, with alienation reduced to the theft of the fruits of labor. How tempting to trumpet forth, yet once more, the incantation to class struggle—as if it were long since ordained what constituted a class, what impelled a class to make history, and what was defensible (and not) in its "struggle." I call this regression for two reasons: first, because it screens out the dreadful history of "state socialism"—neglects, on the theoretical plane, the problem of state power; and second, because it fails to honor the contribution of the discourse-theory move, namely to have pointed out how discourse not only reflects but helps *constitute* the domain of production in which class relations are rooted.

This is not the place to try to develop a political point of view that would transcend Foucaultian relativism without taking refuge in an unworkable universalism. But I do want to outline where I think we ought to be looking. The overarching concept we need is *a politics*

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of limits. Simply, there must be limits to what human beings can be permitted to do with their powers. Most of the atrocities to which our species is prone can be understood as violations of limits. The essence of a politics must be rooted in three protections: (1) The ecological: the earth and human life must be protected against the Bomb and other manmade depredations; (2) The pluralist: the social group must be protected against domination by other social groups; (3) The libertarian: the individual must be protected against domination by collectives. A politics of limits respects horizontal social relations—multiplicity over hierarchy, juxtaposition over usurpation, difference over deference: finally, disorderly life in its flux against orderly death in its finality. The democratic, vital edge of the postmodern, the love of difference and flux and the exuberantly unfinished, deserves to infuse the spirit of politics. Needless to say, this way of putting the matter leaves many questions unsettled: most grievously, what happens when there are conflicts and internal fissures among these objectives? What kind of authority, what kind of difference, is legitimate? Respect for uncertainties is of the essence. This is the properly postmodern note on which I suspend the discussion for now.

What After Postmodernism?

Alongside blasé postmodernism, I am trying to maintain, there is another variant in which pluralist exuberance and critical intelligence reinforce each other. Here we find jubilant disrespect for the boundaries that are supposed to segregate culture castes, but disrespect of this sort does not imply a leveling down, profaning the holy precincts of high culture. Where fey, blasé postmodernism skates along the edge, cheerfully or cheerlessly leaving doubt whether it is to be taken as critical or affirmative, the exuberant and parodic kind tries to undermine the apparently solid ground of belief. Absorbing every scrap of leftover culture, it gets involved with nothing. It is suspicious of crusades and commitments outside the self; it does not galvanize citizenship in a larger community—or imperial enthusiasms, for that matter. The music of the "Vietnam syndrome" is strangely akin to the music, if that is the word, of commodities trading.

The postmodernist arts, in toto, express a spirit that comports well with American culture in the eighties. Alongside ostensible belief, actual disengagement. The standard ideological configurations of "liberal" and "conservative" belief are decomposing, although the decomposition is masked by the fact that the old political language is still in force. The patriotic words are mouthed while the performers signal, in the manner of *Moonlighting* (and Reagan at his self-deprecating best), that they don't really mean them (quite). There is *laissez-faire* in economics as long as you can find an apartment you can afford and as long as you have not thought too long about near-collisions between passenger planes. In *Stranger than Paradise* and David Letterman as well as in the Republican party there is a love for the common people and their kitsch tastes that is indistinguishable from contempt. In politics as in the arts distrust runs rampant while, beneath the surface, as David Byrne and Brian Eno have put it, "America is waiting for a message of some sort or another."

Postmodernism is an art of erosion. Make the most of stagnation, it says, and give up gracefully. That is perhaps its defining break from modernism, which was, whatever its subversive practices, a series of declarations of faith—Suprematism's future, Joyce's present, Eliot's unsurpassable past. What is not clear is whether postmodernism, living off borrowed materials, has the resources for continuing self-renewal. A car with a dead battery can run off its generator only so long. Exhaustion is finally exhausting. But if it is true that deep social forces have been at work for a long time to produce the present cultural anesthesia, then postmodernism is not going to fade automatically. How does a culture renew itself? Not easily. At the least, artists—and theorists—will have to do something else. They will have to cease being stenographers of the surfaces. They will have to decide not to coast down the currents of least resistance. □

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Jeremy Larner

FROM *EASY RIDER* TO *DIRTY HARRY*

Joan Didion, in a needle-sharp piece in the *New York Review of Books*, describes Michael Dukakis outside his campaign plane on a broiling day, playing catch with a baseball. Every reporter and every television crew participant knows the action is a set-up, yet every one of them will feel compelled to cover it, to analyze it. After all, this is the way Dukakis wants to show himself. The *U.S. News and World Report* quotes Dukakis explaining, "What it means is that I'm tough." David Broder in the *Washington Post* reports the ball-tossing straight on as good-humored exercise.

Day after day, Dukakis played catch, and one more television analyst, one more columnist, gave a version of what he was trying to accomplish. Even in Didion's description, the easiest thing to remember is not the fatuity of the happening but the image of Dukakis. As a member of the media, Didion had the same problems in relation to the candidates that movie reviewers do to movies. No matter what they say, the commentators can rarely penetrate the shifting surface of the product's image. No reporter, no television footage—and to a large extent, not even the candidates themselves—could focus the campaign on the reality of the large problems that confront the country or in what fashion either man would set about dealing with them.

This is not to say the public is entirely taken in. The public knows that campaign television is a show, and even children know a commercial is only a commercial. The American audience views the media in order to see through the media. It knew Dukakis was acting and gave him a low rating on his act. But the public can't do more than give out ratings, any more than the reporters can. The myth of the free enterprise, down home, might-makes-right American hero is all around us every day, and it would take a wrenching of history to create another role for the public man to play.

It's almost irrelevant to say that life in America isn't really like a television commercial, and its leaders cannot be Lone Rangers. No one believes the show—but in the theater, there is nowhere else to look.

This is why the introduction of Cher's perfume, "Uninhibited," is accepted at face value. Cher has a winning act. Through much the same mechanism, close questioning of Oliver North is upstaged by North's scripted lies and fantasies—and George Bush can get his show across without submitting to real questions. Americans know, even if vaguely, that what they see is not the whole truth, but they live—like Reagan himself—in a world where reality is blurred by celluloid images, and the process of testing and sorting yields to the choice of which movie to applaud.

Taken literally, Didion's vignette invites a common criticism of Dukakis: Why didn't he respond more quickly to Bush's lies, define some concept of prudent and patriotic liberalism? Such criticism, in fact, was repeated every day in the press or on television—sooner and more frequently than the eventual analysis of Bush's made-up charges. By the time the public did see such analysis—say, of the revolving door/furloughed murderers commercial—it didn't change its collective mind. By then it had been told by "experts"—and seen for itself and heard the polls reporting its reaction—that Bush had won and Dukakis lost the battle of the tough image.

George Bush, meanwhile, tried to keep his voice from screeching and his wavery mouth in place as he continued his transparent but dogged performance as the vigilante lawman who has shot a dirty murderer without reading him his rights.

Soon enough Dukakis did fail, and in failing, became the loser he was said to be, like Mondale and Carter before him. That is the meaning of Republicans evoking FDR and JFK—not that Republicans pretend to share their beliefs—who remembers political beliefs? Like Reagan, FDR and JFK were winners, which means, in the current culture, that they established Clint Eastwoodian

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masculinity, as in "Make my day," "Read my lips," tough on crime, commies, and liberal sissies.

Once Dukakis fell behind, one could see every day how he was calculating in vain to improve his act—and in private those of us who knew we had to vote for him were even more expert in pointing out his strategical failures. Why hadn't he run sharper commercials; why did he stand with his bat on his shoulder and let that ridiculous question about his wife's being raped and murdered float by unanswered? We were outraged that there was no dramatic exposé of Bush's sappy fakery.

In desperation I sent commercials through Dukakis's clogged-up channels making fun of Quayle (Sam Cooke's voice singing "Don't know much about history/Don't know much geography"), but they met the same fate as my suggestion in 1984—that the Mondale people simply replay that news clip of Nancy whispering to Ronnie what to say—and Ronnie dutifully repeating to reporters he would look into it.)

What few reporters did was to construct for Dukakis what a substantive response to Bush might be: the evidence, say, against the death penalty; the effects of Reaganomics on prisons, courts, and mental institutions, the realities of who supported what military programs at what probable cost and effectiveness.

The reason for this is the paradox of the media: The coverage of the campaign is not criticism, not commentary; the coverage *is* the campaign.

One of my vivid memories is of Sam Donaldson of ABC and Lesley Stahl of CBS on a postmortem program telling how they did many reports on the inaccuracies of Bush's commercials. No one seemed to care, they complained. Stahl even did a program on Reagan taking credit for measures he had staunchly opposed, whereupon White House assistants mockingly thanked her for rerunning their favorite visuals.

The point is that all this coverage, including the pointed questions asked by the unctuous Ted Koppel and his poll-obsessed stand-in, Jeff Greenfield, are directed to the ballgame aspect of the race. No sooner does one candidate make his thirty-second point than we are informed how the public responded and, shortly after, how the public responded to the response.

Polls are false news. They can be misleadingly inaccurate, and by the time they appear, they are no longer true. What's more, they make their own news. The most flagrant examples are the exit polls: Insofar as they (imprecisely) give the news that a candidate has won, they affect the votes—and the results, and the news—yet to come. But who could deny the networks their First Amendment rights? They would have to limit themselves—observe a protocol of coverage—a hard discipline for competitors to follow.

What is graceless is when the newscasters complain—as part, of course, of their coverage. Yes, they do keep trying to shout questions to President Reagan above the helicopter blades. But do they tell us every time that since May of '88, when he said he would report back to the American people on Irangate, Reagan has never held another open Washington press conference?

What the networks found, in fact, was what the Irangate investigation found: The American people didn't want to be bothered. Just as that shouldn't have inhibited the congressional investigators, it shouldn't stop the networks from full and persistent reporting on Iran and other questions of substance. But in fact, neither congressmen nor broadcasters want to lose popularity, as measured by votes or viewer ratings. Otherwise the networks would not send their national crews around the country to set up cameras at the candidates' chosen angles and broadcast the idiotic sound bites they disapprove of. And even as they complain, the late-night analysts, with their cultivated toughness and objectivity keep on validating the sound bites by inquiring of their endless array of hacks and pseudo-experts what they think of the latest polls and tactics.

The debates are the ultimate charades, because the networks do not report the negotiations that precede them. It was not revealed, for instance, that the candidates were able to chose their own questioners, nor that the Bush campaign vetoed en masse every reporter who traveled with Bush. Nor was it reported exactly why the League of Women Voters pulled out of the second presidential debate.

What was reported was how the reporting of the debates would determine the results—and to make this news come true, the networks immediately followed the debates with "expert" opinions—not just from partisan "spin-doctors," but from their own analysts and pollsters—as to who had made the better impression. Any analysis of the questions asked (often loaded or banal), or of the accuracy of the replies, could be left for later.

So when the newspeople criticize the campaign, it is like a cameraman suddenly appearing on screen to criticize a movie he is being forced to shoot. Who's forcing them?

Given the nature of air and print space as a

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commodity, the above is a naive question. Media are forced to cover whatever power says is news, and cannot usually force power to answer questions. When a newspaper or television station doesn't cover an event with reverence, it is vulnerable, just like a liberal candidate, to accusations of "running down America." But if there were no exceptions, all the triumphs of the American free press—the Pentagon Papers, the best of the reports from Vietnam, the exposure of Watergate—could never have occurred.

Perhaps the networks and papers could do more of what they started to do as the campaign wore on: devise their own forums, where candidates are invited to give positions or be questioned. Another thing the media could do is to try to lay out preset rules for debates. One debate could be set aside for the candidates to go *mano a mano*. In the daily coverage, sound bites could be refused unless candidates were made available for open questioning—just as, say, the prime minister of Britain must defend her policies in Parliament.

Candidates have rights, too. They surely won't submit to uncontrolled scrutiny unless some protocol is laid down by Congress. One control would be the hundreds of millions of dollars of public funding—why should this money be spent to fly the candidates around staging events for three months, not counting the primary season?

The whole campaign could be shorter if the positive possibilities of television were put to use and the candidates given exposure in a compact and dignified way. It's useless to pretend that they "get to know America"—what they do is meet with local fund raisers to cut deals and get their faces on local television making promises on regional issues they know little about, promises that may be at variance with their long-run positions. The distortions of costly state primaries and fly-by-night national campaigning are the best argument for national primaries and the abolition of the electoral college. These reforms might in turn minimize gimmickry, lying, and image-mongering.

Yet even a shorter, more rational campaign might not ameliorate the Democrats' problems with dramatizing a liberal point of view through the media. Their increased numbers in Congress conceal the fact that many of their strongest spokesmen—and best presidential possibilities—have been defeated in the Reagan era, leaving behind too many who are intimidated by Reagan's "We're number one" approach to public opinion. The Democrats have failed absolutely to demonstrate the drawbacks of Reaganomics—much of which they themselves voted into existence. Most of them would be terrified by Harold Meyerson's concept of "fair taxes"—they feel they have to pretend "no taxes." Nor can they think of cutting middle-class entitlements or government pensions or bureaucracy without fear of losing constituencies. They have at present no national leader capable of speaking about fairness without appearing extreme to a majority of the viewing public.

The challenge as the Democrats currently perceive it—the attempt that did in Dukakis—is to speak of fairness without spelling it out, to speak of cutbacks without telling the truth about America's decline. To fail at this rhetorical program is, as we have seen, to look like a buffoon, but it will almost certainly be tried again, because to speak out more directly is to invite the Republicans to call out the dark and ignorant forces from the backwoods of American jingo vigilantism. The lesson most Democrats learned from Dukakis is a lesson of style, not substance: namely, that one can get by with saying less if one immediately goes to the attack.

The main thing going for the next Democratic candidate is exactly what was going for him this time: the Republican is certain to be a mealy mouthed hypocrite. He could probably be beaten—just as Reagan himself could have been the first time—with some humor and grit. Commercials, finally, don't count as much as how the candidate presents himself. But the dilemma remains: One can bring the bad news and risk getting killed or fudge it and risk coming across as a gutless bookkeeping wimp.

The great obstacle to Democratic leadership in America is a time-honored image battled back and forth between the public and the media—who can say which started it?—the frontier idea that life is a win-or-lose contest where justice prevails because it is ruthless. Could the people who admire red-white-and-blue number-one fingers at the Olympics accept the notion that America's been sold into a second-class future for the profit of the rich? Or that large areas of foreign policy have been run through secret deals with thugs and adventurers? As Todd Gitlin has said, "They just don't want to hear it."

Not now, at least. Maybe not unless and until big economic misfortunes hit. The Democrats have not been able adequately to explain the dangers of the deficit. And dealings with assorted dictators don't count.

By the time you read this, the press and television

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will be saturating the country with sentimental accounts of the tributes attendant upon Reagan's leaving office. Even if further evidence arises on early deals with Iran, even if Reagan pardons North and Poindexter (or will Bush do that for him?), the treacle will flow. Our even-handed commentators will grant Reagan that he really is "the Gipper," that he "brought America back"—into what?, why "morning in America."

Never mind that every Washington reporter—or politician—I have talked to says that for at least four years Reagan has not known or controlled what is going on in government. The media are willing enough to let Reagan's former staffers write their books. But when it comes to including Reagan's blissful ignorance as part of their regular reporting, they have their own reasons for showing themselves as sports and playing Reagan's game.

The big-time media people must be, above all, respectable. Their own seriousness is bound up in the seriousness of what they so gravely report. They would far rather say the jolly emperor's clothes are dirty than cover the emperor as a man who wears no clothes at all.

But never mind speculation. What is clear from the election is that nastiness pays. Even as the public knows such stuff is vicious, its attention will be focused through the media on how the opponent defends himself. The attack is going to be doubly effective if it impugns the opponent's red-blooded American masculinity. It's no accident that Bush told the *New York Times* we have passed from the era of "Easy Rider" to the era of "Dirty Harry." Neither film has much to do with what America ever was really like, but they—like the fabricated man who so confidently cites them—are part of the image-mongering culture that makes a reality of its own that is all but inescapable. □

dissent

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Joanne Barkan

ONCE UPON A TIME . . .

NARRATIVES OF LOVE AND LOSS: STUDIES IN MODERN CHILDREN'S FICTION, by Margaret and Michael Rustin. London and New York: Verso, 1988. 268 pp. Cloth, $40.00. Paper, $13.95.

Every socialist knows how to fantasize; it comes with the territory. Even reading the newspaper becomes an exercise in imagining what should be rather than what is.

But who develops the capacity to fantasize and who doesn't? What—beyond genes and early experiences in the family—shapes a child so that in later life she or he hopes for a better future and can act on that hope?

Michael Rustin, a sociologist and contributor to *Dissent*, and Margaret Rustin, child psychotherapist and senior tutor at the Tavistock Clinic in London, explore these questions in their fine book, *Narratives of Love and Loss*. They point out that in the twentieth century, Western society has made childhood into a field of social practice that includes schooling, publishing, family policy, and therapy. Along with the primary experience of the family, each of these influences the development of the personal self.

The Rustins examine in depth one piece of the emergent culture of childhood—modern fiction for children. For them, the best writing for children has a profound impact. Good storybooks are wonderfully serious business.

The Rustins analyze about two dozen works written by ten authors (seven British and three American). The readers (or listeners) of these stories would range in age from about five to eleven. All the books are beloved and best selling, so the Rustins can assume that kids do, in fact, respond to them. But why?

The Rustins carry out their investigation from three points of view: psychoanalytic, sociological, and literary. They place the most emphasis on the psychoanalytic dimension, and this is where they are most insightful.

According to the Rustins, the works they've chosen find symbolic equivalents for unconscious states of feeling—states of feeling typical of a child's psychological development. Through these symbolic equivalents, the stories connect with children at the deepest level. The mode is metaphoric rather than direct; and much of the meaning is latent rather than explicit.

The children who respond to these stories are beginning an independent exploration of the social world (in school, through friendships, during periods away from home) at a psychological phase when family relations—good or bad—are still central. Simultaneously, children at this age are attempting to negotiate a space between family and social world, a space that is critically linked to their developing sense of a personal self. The themes of separation, loss, and reunion are lived by them every day.

The best chapters in the Rustins' book analyze the best of the children's stories they've chosen. Topping the list is a chapter on E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, and *The Trumpet of the Swan*.

The Rustins see *Charlotte's Web* as a fable of an infant's development under the competent care of the "good mother." Charlotte the spider bears the young pig Wilbur's anxieties about abandonment and death while she devises a way to save him. The story pursues Wilbur's maturation into an independent being, able to take responsibility for others. Under Charlotte's guidance, he also prepares for the death of his "parent" and finds the resources to live without her.

The narrative depicts a second, simultaneous process of development. Fern, the little girl who also plays the role of good mother for Wilbur, gradually relinquishes the normal preoccupations of the latency period; she moves on, the Rustins say, "to the wider world where there is a different sort of adventure and where sex exists." In one of E. B. White's loveliest visual metaphors, we see Fern separate herself from her own good mother. At the invitation of an acquaintance named Henry Fussy, she soars above the country fair in a Ferris wheel.

> When Mrs. Arable happened to look up into the starry sky and saw her little daughter sitting with

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Henry Fussy and going higher and higher into the air, and saw how happy Fern looked, she just shook her head. "My, my!" she said. "Henry Fussy. Think of that!"

The Rustins skillfully weave the psychoanalytic and the sociological when they analyze *The Slave Dancer* by Paula Fox. This novel for older children tells the story of thirteen-year-old Jessie who is kidnapped and coerced into service aboard a slave ship bound for Africa. Once the ship has picked up its human cargo, Jessie is made to play his fife while the slaves are forced to "dance" for exercise and for the sadistic pleasure of their captors.

For the Rustins, *The Slave Dancer* is as much about Jessie's inner ability to maintain a sense of a good parental object as it is about the external circumstances of the slave trade. By identifying with his remembered parents, with two alternative parent figures, and with the slaves who suffer more than he does, Jessie manages to survive. In turn, the child's belief in a better future—his hope—elicits the remaining capacity for moral discrimination in members of the crew.

This is the story of a child's maturation through confrontation with a brutal historical reality. But Fox has enabled a young reader to assimilate the history of the slave trade through identification with both the interior and exterior odysseys of the child protagonist.

Any adult lucky enough to have read stories of this quality as a child knows how important they are. If the Rustins are correct, adults retain strong feelings about their favorite childhood books precisely because those books functioned as symbolic equivalents for unconscious states of feeling.

* * *

The market for juvenile books in the United States has boomed in the 1980s. Domestic sales of hardcover children's books totaled $151.5 million in 1979. For 1988, the industry projects domestic sales of $367.7 million. Children's books are probably the fastest growth area in all U.S. trade book publishing.

Who is buying all these books? It turns out that one boom begets another: members of the postwar baby boom generation now have small children. The baby boomers are better educated and have more disposable income than previous generations. They want their kids to get ahead and they've been told that the "reading habit" is important. So they buy books. But whether they're getting quality for their money is another question.

Juvenile book publishing in the United States has changed substantially over the last decade. Megacorporate capital invaded even the most genteel editorial offices, launching a process of industry-wide consolidation. Typically, one publisher ingests several others. The resulting corporate structure is supposedly streamlined—leaner and meaner. But the character of the business has changed: the financial types, rather than "book people," now dominate.

The executive overseeing a juvenile books division is likely to be someone with an M.B.A. and expertise in marketing. No more myths about lovers of literature hovering over manuscripts with blue pencils. An editor-in-chief acquires properties, contracts out series, and establishes publishing programs ("We need sixteen Care Bear manuscripts written in the next six weeks, and bound books shipped for Christmas").

Juvenile publishing resembles nothing so much as Hollywood movie-making. The key word is "safe." What worked before is done again . . . and again and again. Books that won't fit into labeled slots aren't published; picture-book art takes precedence over text; and fiction for the middle grades—the category of books investigated by the Rustins—is often neglected.

Publishers spend several weeks each year in sales meetings listening to sales reps tell them where the best niches are. A few years ago, everyone rushed into the preschool space. More recently, market researchers have identified a promising crevice between beginning-reader books and middle-grade fiction.

Like Hollywood producers, publishers don't want to shake anyone up. The world in most children's stories is predictable, unambiguous, and there is never an authentic sense of loss. Editors look for humor and adventure. And when there's a "message," it's aimed smack into everyday consciousness: "Don't be afraid of the dentist because he's really as nice as your dad." "Just be yourself, and you'll be popular, too." "Yes, Grandma died, but a nice woman with grey hair has just moved in next door." This is the quick fix—like Band-Aids over gaping wounds.

The Hollywood syndrome infects both major sectors of juvenile publishing—mass market and trade. "Mass market" refers to books sold in supermarkets, convenience stores, and so on. "Trade" books are sold in retail bookstores. Even the "prestige" houses conform slavishly to market norms.

The Reagan administration has played a role in the degradation of children's publishing. The White House heartily supported changes in the FCC regulations that govern television programming for children. As a consequence, "toy-based TV" was born, and a chunk of children's publishing attached itself to the toy industry.

The new FCC regulations permit stations to air

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programs whose main characters are owned by toy companies. The toy companies finance the shows, control the scripts, and then sell the toys that "tie into" the shows. In spring 1988, twenty toy-based shows (critics call them "program-length ads") regularly wafted their way into American homes.

The selling power of television suddenly made dozens of new "characters" into valuable properties. So the toy companies began licensing their characters out to product manufacturers. Manufacturers churned out Rainbow Brite t-shirts, Strawberry Shortcake notepads, Smurf pillow cases, He-Man lunch boxes, and—most important of all—books. From the toy manufacturers' point of view, books not only generated significant income, they also "developed and maintained" the characters.

Character licensing is nothing new. The Disney people have been at it for decades, and Raggedy Ann has been around for even longer. Movies, too, generate licensing—just think of *Star Wars*. But the deregulation of children's television set off an unprecedented explosion.

The Wuzzles and company did not inspire great works of literature. But for four or five years in the mid-1980s, licensing generated a ton of books. Then the scheme faltered. In the competitive grab for licenses, publishers were forced to sign multimillion-dollar deals before characters had "proved themselves" in the market. For every blockbuster, there were a dozen disasters. In one film-generated fiasco, Grosset & Dunlap acquired the license for *Santa Claus: The Movie* and produced eighteen books. The movie flopped.

By 1987, publishers had dropped many licenses; they were taking on new ones cautiously. Even Random House, which had previously acquired them by the handful, offered just Popples, Wrinkles, and a few "classics" such as Sesame Street on its spring 1987 list. But damage had been done.

The licensing frenzy set a new low standard for children's books. Publishers learned to crank out "product" at record speeds. They also came to know and love the big money deals of the mass market. Some book producers now see books as simply the first step in a grand merchandising strategy. With the right kind of story and characters, a book might generate a market for dolls, bubble bath, digital watches, and even the "big-ticket" items—bicycles, kiddie pools, and the full-size playhouse. No latent metaphors here.

The stampede for licensed characters also aggravated the worst aspects of a class-divided book market. Critics accused publishers of overwhelming stores with junk books, which then displaced the better books. Some publishers replied that since most licensed-character books went into the mass market, the better books in the trade market weren't displaced.

But why shouldn't the mass market get better books for kids, too? They might have to be less expensive, but they *could* be good books.

No. Juvenile publishing for the mass market is governed by a law that long antedates the licensing boom: The folks who buy books in places like Caldor's want just what they're given—insipid stories, clumsy writing, cartoon-style illustrations in garish colors for young kids, mysteries, preteen romance, and straight adventure for the older ones. The "merch" gets produced because there's a market for it—so the wisdom goes.

On a gentrified stretch of Seventh Avenue in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood, there's a fine children's bookstore called Books of Wonder. The owners know children's literature; they choose their stock carefully; they carry all the classics, early editions, and the best of the new. But they stock only hardcover editions of their picture books. The manager explains that their clientele never bought the paperback editions. This makes complete sense. The folks who shop there want to hold on to their Maurice Sendak and Chris Van Allsburg and J. M. Barrie with the Arthur Rackham plates. And who wouldn't? The books are lovely. They are also expensive.

Most Americans can't afford to buy books for their children in small specialty shops. Moreover such shops don't exist in working-class and poor neighborhoods; they don't exist in most small cities or towns either. Independent bookstores have a hard time staying in business; they survive by selling higher-priced books in locales where wealth is sufficiently concentrated.

The public libraries were supposed to democratize distribution. And for many years they did. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, library funds sustained hardback publishers of children's books. Then the Reagan administration strangled library funding. Luckily for the industry, affluent baby boomers now began buying hardbacks. As a result of this surge in private consumption, the number of independent children's bookstores in the United States has increased.

So the more privileged have greater access to well-stocked stores where they get help from knowledgeable personnel. The less prosperous make up the expanded mass market; they flip through the self-service racks at Kmart where they find son of He-Man, neo-Wrinkles, second generation Smurfs.

Publishers justify the low quality of their products in yet another way. They claim that if they didn't

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give kids what they want—easy entertainment—the little television addicts wouldn't read at all. Books compete with the tube, and the tube is winning. So better the current crop of books than no books at all.

But suppose part of the reason kids don't read is that they're not encountering books that connect with them at the deepest level. Shouldn't such books be irresistible? Yet it's foolish to think that most children can find these books themselves. They—like most adults—initially pick up what's familiar and easy. Parents, teachers, and librarians have a role to play in introducing kids to the best. The Rustins' illuminating study can help them. But unless children's publishers make a greater commitment to literature, there won't be much *new* substance to nurture the current generation. □

Ethan Goffman

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

LOVESONG: BECOMING A JEW, by Julius Lester, New York: Henry Holt, 1988. 248 pp. $17.95.

Julius Lester is one of the tiny number of blacks to convert to Judaism, thereby placing himself in double jeopardy. *Lovesong,* the autobiographical tale of Lester's journey from minister's son to Jewish convert, shows him beset by prejudice and misunderstanding from every direction. He has repeatedly followed the path of most resistance, with controversy his constant companion. Moderation is not his style; once he decides on a position he sticks to it with forceful, strident rhetoric. Only a headstrong personality coupled with a wry intelligence and eloquence has enabled him to survive his battles.

As a young radical working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) he gave himself to a passionate time. Through his book *Look Out Whitey! Black Power's Gon Get Your Mama!* and his WBAI radio show in New York City, he championed black power. Yet even then, he admits, his true identity was a source of bewilderment. He was shocked that the flat, one-dimensional ideologue he projected in public was actually perceived as being *him:* "To be identified personally with words I have written is frightening." As the emissary of a black message, his individuality was lost.

While at WBAI he subjected himself, or rather was subjected to, the first of a series of controversies in which the personal and political converged:

It is 1968. Black activists battle the United Federation of Teachers for community control of schools. Charges of extremism and anti-Semitism are heaped on the black community. In response, Lester has a poem by a black schoolgirl read on his show: "Hey, Jewboy, with that yarmulke on your head / you pale-faced Jewboy—I wish you were dead. . . ." These sentiments, Lester explains, are not his own, but serve to indicate the swelling hatred caused by Jewish intransigence. This argument does not convince the Jewish Defense League. Demands for Lester's resignation are backed by picketing and death threats. Confronted by raw hatred, Lester exclaims of racism on WBAI: "Now I realize that when you roll away one layer, there's another one, more vicious, more ugly, and then you roll away that one, and, lo and behold, there's another one." Subsequent events in his life, in utterly changed circumstances, give these words the ring of truth.

Even at this stage, Lester perceived certain similarities in the Jewish and black conditions, similarities prone to bizzare shifts and reversals. Initially, he used these similarities to aggressively promote black rights while portraying Jews as hypocrites. In that same broadcast, Lester proclaimed, "In America it is we who are the Jews. . . . There is no need for black people to wear yellow Stars of David on their sleeves; that Star of David is all over us. And the greatest irony of all is that it is the Jews who are in the position of being Germans." Paradoxically, this statement may help to explain Lester's later call to Judaism. He is one of a very few blacks to dwell on the similarities between the two groups. His awareness of Jewish persecution swelled slowly, leading to interest, study, and increasing sympathy.

Identification with Judaism was woven into Lester's past. He was one-eighth Jewish by descent. His Christian upbringing and Bible study fused the Old Testament into his makeup. Even as a child, he found that Jewish stories and music had a power over him. He found Christianity too formal and too evangelical. After a long search through a variety of religious experiences, he found in Judaism a framework for his religious nature. He identified with its insistence on absolute moral choice. He identified also with the suffering of the Holocaust. Yet ultimately his conversion was a personal choice, intangible and mysterious.

Judaism may have provided meaning to Lester, but it also caused a great uprooting in his life: division from friends and colleagues, strife, anger, rage. The most concentrated instance of this divisiveness followed Andrew Young's resignation as ambassador to the United Nations after he met

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secretly with a represenative of the PLO. Once again, blacks and Jews exchanged recriminations, with blacks accusing Jews of insensitivity. Young's resignation was somehow linked to such issues as the Jewish stand on affirmative action. Writing in the *Village Voice*, Lester proclaimed that blacks did not understand the Jewish position, ignoring the meaning of Jewish history and suffering. Black protests against Jews served to "merely show that Blacks, too, can be Germans."

The drama of Lester's 1968 radio broadcast is reenacted in reverse. This time, it is blacks who lash out against him. Many of Lester's colleagues at the University of Massachusetts's Afro-American department refuse to speak to him. One colleague tells him, "You don't know shit! You don't know a goddamned thing about Jews!" A stormy battle over a James Baldwin lecture leads to Lester's transfer out of the Afro-American department, despite his familiarity with black literature. This knowledge is not enough for him to keep his position; he lacks the proper beliefs. In the world of race relations, Lester discovers that dogma is everything. Friendships crumble in the face of politics.

Lester believes that blacks have lost their old morality, "a morality which demands that we recognize and acknowledge the humanity of white people, especially because they made the denial of ours a creed by which they lived." The status of victimization should bring at least one advantage: an ennobling quality through empathy with the human race. Having suffered, blacks should understand the suffering of others, and work to prevent all forms of racism.

Instead, Lester feels that blacks have used their suffering as an excuse to turn against others: "Arrogance is, however, a common fault of oppressed people when they believe their own status as victims gives them the advantage of moral superiority." Thus we have the recent anti-Jewish behavior of some black politicians in Chicago. And in Israel, the horrors of the Holocaust and of Arab terrorism are used to justify a widening circle of narrow mindedness and violence. The tragedy is not that we forget the past; we dwell on it obsessively and draw the wrong conclusions from it. We learn only hatred and hence find our own way of repeating others' mistakes. *Lovesong*'s political lesson is of humanity's capacity for hatred and intolerance. Perhaps in his religion Lester has found some relief from this terrible fact. □

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Eric Foner

SLAVERY & THE WEST

THE OVERTHROW OF COLONIAL SLAVERY 1776–1848, by Robin Blackburn. London and New York: Verso, 1988, 560 pp.

The finest body of historical writing to appear during the past twenty years has probably been produced by students of slavery and emancipation. An outpouring of exceptional studies by scholars in the United States, Brazil, Cuba, and other countries has transformed our understanding of issues ranging from slave life and culture to planter ideology and the economics of slavery. These works have established beyond question the centrality of slavery to the Western hemisphere's settlement and development and to the rise and fall of European empires in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

Robin Blackburn's *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery* is not only the latest addition to this impressive body of literature but one of the finest studies of slavery and abolition to appear in many years. The book's strength is not new research—Blackburn's account rests on his extraordinary command of the secondary literature—but its broad scope and original, incisive conceptualization. Crisscrossing the Atlantic, Blackburn welds events both in the centers of empire and the slave-based colonies of the New World into a coherent narrative. Equally important, he shows how the social, economic, and political changes unleashed by the Age of Revolution had a contradictory impact on slavery, strengthening it in some places while leading to abolition in others. To explain the fate of slavery in individual colonies, he examines the nature of the planter class, the impact of antislavery ideology, political developments and class conflicts within the relevant metropolitan power, and—a factor often ignored by previous students of abolition—the struggles of the slaves to free themselves.

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The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery opens in 1770, when slavery was pivotal in the expansion of European commercial capitalism. The labor of the Western Hemisphere's 2.5 million slaves (the majority in the British and French West Indies) produced the most coveted commodities of Atlantic trade. In 1770 slave-grown products, the most important of which was sugar, accounted for one-third of the value of all European commerce. In the slave colonies increasingly self-conscious planter classes had emerged, fully aware of their economic importance to the British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese empires but resentful of imperial regulation of trade and their own lack of political autonomy. Meanwhile, although a growing number of philosophers, from Montesquieu to Adam Smith, had begun to criticize slavery on moral and economic grounds, abolitionism remained a feeble movement. To most whites, slavery was simply part of the natural order of things.

It required the crisis of empire in the Age of Revolution to transform antislavery into a genuine political force. On the West Indian islands, where slaves made up 80 percent or more of the population, the planters were aware of their dependence on metropolitan authorities to suppress potential slave insurrections and this inhibited them from seeking independence. In mainland British colonies, however, where slaves in most localities were outnumbered by whites, planters took the lead in the struggle for political autonomy.

Blackburn is particularly persuasive in delineating the ambiguous relationship of the American Revolution to slavery. In the northern colonies, where slavery was marginal to the economy and blacks relatively few in number, the Revolution's libertarian ideology inspired the hemisphere's first emancipations, although Blackburn reminds us how cautious northern abolition generally was. Most states adopted gradual plans that freed the children of slaves rather than those actually in bondage. As a result, slavery, although on the road to extinction, lingered well into the nineteenth century (in 1860, there were still two elderly slaves in New Jersey). In the South, however, the throwing off of British authority left planters in undisputed control of their own affairs, and the new federal Constitution guaranteed the stability of the slave system.

The abolition of slavery in the northern states helped inspire the rise of an antislavery movement in Great Britain. But its efforts made little headway, despite a campaign that gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures on petitions calling for an end to the slave trade. The next emancipation was produced by the uprising of the slaves on St. Domingue, the jewel of France's American empire. The story of this revolution has been brilliantly told by C. L. R. James in *The Black Jacobins*. Blackburn's account of events in St. Domingue essentially follows James's, but he integrates it with developments in revolutionary France. Under the impact of the slave revolution, he shows, abolitionism grew from a preoccupation of the tiny and ineffectual *Amis des Noirs* into an idea with broad popular support. In 1794, the revolutionary convention decreed emancipation throughout the French empire—a momentous (though temporary) alliance of black liberation in the New World and revolutionary Jacobinism in the old.

Napoleon restored slavery to the other French islands in 1802, and sought unsuccessfully to do the same on St. Domingue. Not until 1848, in the wake of yet another revolution, did irrevocable emancipation come to the rest of the French empire (with monetary compensation for the planters). Yet Blackburn insists on the critical importance of the black revolt of the 1790s. St. Domingue linked slave rebellion with the modern ideologies of the Age of Revolution, even as it terrified slaveholders and led to a severe tightening of police controls. (Jefferson as president sought to strangle the new nation of Haiti—the hemisphere's second independent republic—by cutting off its burgeoning trade with the United States.)

Although Blackburn's account of the process of abolition in the French Empire is gripping and persuasive, he reserves his most detailed analysis for the antislavery struggle in Britain. He traces the ebb and flow of abolitionist sentiment, linking its fortunes with changes in the national and international political climate. When British ruling circles took a sharp turn to the right in response to the French Revolution, the movement of the late 1780s and early 1790s came to an abrupt halt. The growing class conflict within Britain was reflected in the antislavery movement, as radical artisans linked the demand for abolition with a broad program for restructuring the British political and social order, while middle-class foes of slavery, like William Wilberforce, joined the Pitt administration in a virulent crusade against Jacobinism at home and abroad.

As the international crisis eased after 1800, antislavery agitation revived. Indeed, in a resolutely reactionary political regime, now confident of its stability as the French and working-class threats abated, abolition of the slave trade, argues Blackburn, became an action that could safely give the government an aura of reformism. After the African slave trade was outlawed in 1807, abolitionism retreated, partly because class conflict again became

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explosive within Britain. As calm returned in the 1820s, antislavery rose again, its demands made more insistent by an outbreak of slave revolts in the British West Indies. In 1833, abolition finally came to the British empire.

Why did the British Parliament abolish slavery? This question has long bedeviled historians. Forty years ago Eric Williams proposed a simple economic explanation: After spawning the profits that fueled British industrialism, slavery had become economically unprofitable. Subsequent research, however, demonstrated that slavery in much of the West Indies was still quite profitable in 1833. In the 1970s David Brion Davis proposed the arresting thesis that abolition triumphed because it served the ideological interests of the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. By isolating one form of labor exploitation as uniquely repellent, it in effect sanctified the capitalist wage system as a form of "freedom," locating social injustice outside British society rather than within.

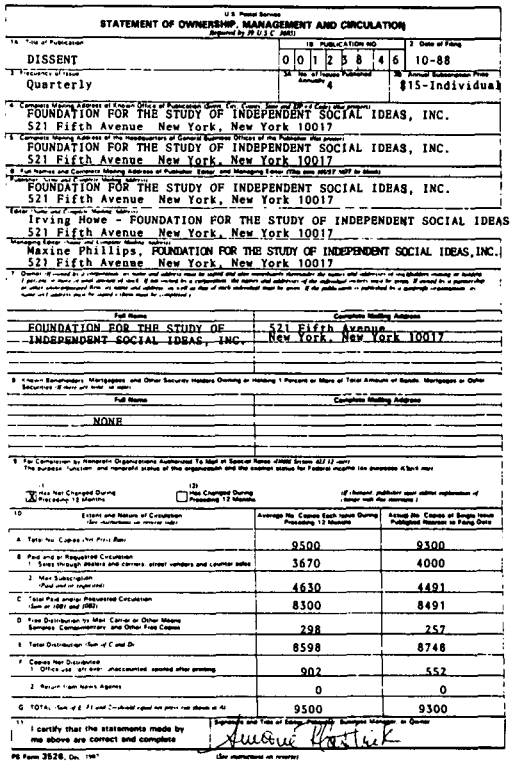
Blackburn's approach builds upon the arguments of Williams and Davis but moves well beyond them. Slavery may have been profitable, he observes, but because of the industrial revolution, slave-grown crops represented a declining part of British commerce and thus the institution was increasingly vulnerable to attack. Antislavery did form part of an effort by a new capitalist class to reinforce its legitimacy and mobilize popular support. But, Blackburn insists, support for abolition transcended class lines and its ideology was susceptible to divergent interpretations. Middle-class advocates of parliamentary reform pointed to abolition as the kind of measure the unreformed Parliament would not enact. "Popular antislavery" linked abolition with anti-capitalist themes, especially fear that the British worker was losing his economic independence and becoming a "wage slave." Many abolitionists supported the draconian changes in the poor law introduced at the same time as abolition, a law that eliminated public relief outside of workhouses, but for others, emancipation was an example of how economic relations could be regulated by the state and judged by moral rather than strictly economic standards. "Anti-slavery," in other words, "had an appeal for all classes," not just the bourgeoisie.

Blackburn is certainly correct that by 1830 opposition to slavery was present in all classes, but those in power fixed the terms of emancipation. Slavery was abolished, but an apprenticeship system was introduced in an attempt to force blacks to remain as a disciplined plantation labor force. One form of private property was abolished, but the planters received over-generous compensation, with the working class footing the bill via a regressive tax system. And if prevailing economic interests did not inspire abolition, they did not lose much by it.

Slavery, Blackburn concludes, was abolished not for economic reasons, narrowly defined, but because "it became politically untenable." Major economic interests depended on the institution's stability, and even in the Age of Revolution a powerful ideology sustained it. (Blackburn places far more emphasis on respect for "property rights" than racism as a factor diminishing antislavery agitation.) It took severe social and political crises to shake slavery's foundations. Only at moments of exceptional crisis—political revolts, slave rebellions, European revolutions, mass mobilizations for reform—did abolition become feasible.

The fruit of many years of research and writing, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery* is an impressive achievement. The book does have its weaknesses. In the detailed narrative of events in lands ranging from St. Domingue and Brazil to England and France, the book's main themes sometimes recede from view—although they are effectively brought together in the final chapter. (Indeed, the reader would be well advised to read the last chapter first before plunging into the body of the text.)

For all its limitations, Blackburn insists, abolition was a major achievement. Yet the melancholy fact is that in 1848, when the book ends, far more slaves



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labored in the Western Hemisphere than in 1770; the geographical area they cultivated had expanded tremendously; and cotton played a role in international commerce perhaps even more significant than sugar once had. Slavery was powerfully entrenched in Cuba, the largest Caribbean island, and in the hemisphere's two largest nations, Brazil and the United States. Further political conflict and violence lay ahead before abolition could be completed. □

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein

MANAGING TECHNOLOGY

IN THE AGE OF THE SMART MACHINE: THE FUTURE OF WORK AND POWER, by Shoshana Zuboff. New York: Basic Books, 1988. 468 pp. $19.95.

The voices of labor have always expressed caution at the introduction of new technology in the workplace. Some have been muted responses from those willing to wait and see. Others have been loud and organized cries against known or feared hazards: technological unemployment, dehumanizing routinization of the work process, and greater managerial control of the worker.

Lessons learned from the past have provided the basis for these concerns. But such insights may lack the perspective that can be gained from a comparative and objective analysis.

Shoshana Zuboff, a sociologist at the Harvard Business School, has studied several workplaces: a telephone operating company, two paper and pulp mills, and a pharmaceutical company, all recently transformed by computer technology. The product of her research is a rich and complex picture of the consequences of technology for workers, managers, and society. The questions she raises have to do with the quality of working life, productivity, and the distribution of power.

Her work challenges some recent prophets. Harry Braverman, for example, forecast a kind of doomsday effect from impoverishment of the work experience—"deskilling"—and the increase of control over workers. Other theorists too, especially neo-Marxists, have expressed the belief that managers will control if they have the means. This is true, no doubt, for most.

But Zuboff observes that the same technologies have different effects on varying categories of workers—depending on managerial policies and the culture of the workplace. As Michael Harrington pointed out recently in a speech to celebrants of his sixtieth birthday, the most important point of Zuboff's book is the issue of values and the ways in which they are translated into the structure of control.

For, as Zuboff points out, it is not technology but the managing of technology that results in deskilling or *re*skilling, exploitation or empowerment. The computer gives managers the power to monitor work more extensively than ever before—but managers differ in their will to control, in the means they choose, and in the spheres over which they exercise control. Some are interested only in the labor process; others demand control over dress, demeanor, and attitude outside as well as inside the workplace. Control over their own jobs also motivates managers who mediate technology.

It is the problem of the Garden of Eden all over again. Zuboff suggests that the age-old struggle over the control of knowledge is of supreme importance in an era in which the computer provides potential access to information across all strata.

There is a paradox here. The computer can be used to make knowledge available to workers and increase their capacity to make decisions, or it may be used to block their access to knowledge. For example, the upper managers of one bank told Zuboff that the lower managers and clerical staff once understood how the bank operated but that with the automation of the 1970s and 1980s most of that knowledge was now stored in a machine.

> With our automated systems, the clerks' tool became a terminal. . . . You don't need to think, because the machine makes the calculations and performs the control.

Yet the picture is complex. Upper-level managers clearly have access to far more knowledge today than ever before. And, using the computer, most have swift access to a larger base of data with which to make decisions about clients' businesses or about guidance of the production process.

Workers using computers may be relieved of some of the worst drudgery and the dirty and dangerous aspects of their work, freeing them for other activities at work and for increased leisure.

There is no doubt that computers can be used to extend managers' knowledge of worker productivity, giving them greater power to appraise and scrutinize the behavior of employees. Those scrutinized often suffer, not only from physical stress but from anxiety.

The question of intent is complex. For Zuboff the role of technology in the workplace is a product of middle managers' interpretations of top management's viewpoint. As she reports:

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> The signal to the organization is "reduce the number of people." The traditional logic is that if you begin with one hundred positions and bring in new technology, you should end up with seventy-five positions.

Thus, Zuboff suggests, managers have tended to measure their own worth by their ability to carry out this charge as the surrogate for the owners. (Actually, however, at some workplaces, the number of jobs increases as a result of new technology, an issue not dealt with in this book.)

Their problem in assessing themselves is linked to their reluctance to share the knowledge base. If workers can learn what managers know, the necessity for managerial authority is called into question. Managers admitted to Zuboff the degree to which their need for certainty and control determined their approach to employing technology. In the face of uncertainty, people cling to traditional roles. Sharing knowledge means sharing authority, and that causes concern. In the words of one, "You want me to build skills in others that I'm not sure I have in myself, and my future is uncertain to boot." And workers were well aware of this. As one worker observed, "It seems management is afraid to let us learn too much about how this system operates. The more we know, the more we could sabotage it." And further, "They think we're kids and they know what's best. There's no trust, no respect."

But clinging to tradition is not only a management prerogative. Workers whose experience is replaced by data bases may find it difficult to make inferences from electronic text to physical processes. No longer does the process have a material base; there is no "thing" to see or touch or kick "to make [the machine] hum." Like the managers who understood that employees were working when they saw sweat on their brows but are less able to calculate the expenditure of energy when they observe employees sitting at a computer terminal, workers often report feeling ambivalent or "adrift."

The major issue seems to be a struggle over the boundaries that define hierarchy. Because modern technology and organization blur boundaries, there seems to be a considerable investment in reconstituting them. Thus, who becomes skilled and unskilled, subordinate and superior, are all intertwined questions. "We are all struggling for our turf," one manager told Zuboff. "The technology will mean a change in our social system."

Zuboff suggests that a change in social system is precisely what is called for. Her vision is of an integrated, interdependent, fluid, "posthierarchical" workplace. She sees workers engaged in an informating (her term) process based on relationships in which the old rules about the distribution of knowledge are replaced.

Zuboff does not consider how values and habits from *outside* the workplace intrude on the expectations managers and workers have about relationships at work. Some new research suggests that the outcome of technological change is mediated by gender relations and ideology, for example. Minorities and women tend to be assigned jobs that become most deskilled and controlled, while white male craft workers retain more autonomy even in jobs that are changing technologically. Thus, cultural views must also be changed if changes in the workplace that ennoble workers rather than degrade them are to be achieved.

Not all of Zuboff's insights are new, but they bear consideration. She ably employs keen analysis from hands-on research, historical comparison, and empathy for the minds and hearts of working people at all levels of the organization in this striking work.□

George Scialabba

SOCIALISTS & CATHOLICS

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM: AN INFORMAL HISTORY, by John Cort. New York: Orbis Books, 1988. 402 pp. $12.95.

> "Any serious Christian must be a socialist."
> —Paul Tillich
>
> "Christian socialism is a contradiction in terms."
> —Pope Pius XI

John Cort has taken on a vexed and intricate topic: the politics of Christianity. As intellectual history, *Christian Socialism* deserves a straight A—even if, as political advocacy, it's less easy to grade.

Cort has subtitled his book "An Informal History," but it's hard to see how a more "formal" approach (whatever this distinction signifies, apart from the author's welcome lack of academic tonelessness and timidity) could have improved it. Though not encyclopedic, *Christian Socialism* is comprehensive and judicious, full of vivid detail and narrative momentum. The only significant omission, acknowledged by Cort, is a discussion of Jacques Maritain. But then Maritain's social thought is so bound up with his abstruse and difficult neo-Thomist metaphysics that his exclusion is probably a *felix culpa*.

Hardly anyone, except perhaps a few neoconservatives, needs to be reminded by now that the Old

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Testament and the rest of the Hebrew scriptures are full of rousing exhortations to social justice. After several decades of the Social Gospel and liberation theology, only the most fervent right-wing preachers and politicians can be, or seem, unaware of the many sayings and parables in the New Testament urging active solicitude for the poor. Cort's account of the biblical tradition has the merit of bringing out its this-worldliness, of demonstrating the obligatory rather than optional character of what might be anachronistically called income redistribution. Anyone—Christian or non-Christian—who supposes that "the poor you have always with you" is the Gospels' last word on the social question will be forcefully set right by Cort's first two chapters.

Even more radical are some formulations Cort cites from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Here is St. Basil in the fourth century:

> The bread in your hoard belongs to the hungry; the cloak in your wardrobe belongs to the naked; the shoes you let rot belong to the barefoot; the money in your vaults belongs to the destitute. All you might help and do not—to all these you are doing wrong.

And St. Ambrose, around the same time:

> You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his.

And St. Gregory the Great, two centuries later:

> When we furnish the destitute with any necessity we render them what is theirs, not bestow on them what is ours; we pay the debt of justice rather than perform the works of mercy.

The less eloquent, more systematic Aquinas grounded these splendid sentiments in a doctrine of conditional property rights: private property "is not contrary to natural law," but natural law also dictates that "goods held in superabundance by some people should be used for the maintenance of the poor." Aquinas added that it is the duty of the state to provide for the public welfare, to ensure each person "a sufficiency of those material goods which are indispensable to well-being." If the church did not altogether forget these teachings between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it underemphasized them fairly consistently.

When we get to modern times—to More and Muntzer, Lamennais and Kingsley, Pesch and Mounier, Tillich and Niebuhr—Cort's story becomes somewhat more familiar, though there are still fascinating episodes: the four-hundred-year history of the Hutterites; the fateful failure of Frederick Maurice to lead the English Christian socialists into an alliance with the Chartists; the nineteenth-century worker-cooperative movement founded by Philippe Buchez; a dramatic confrontation between the leonine Marx and the comparatively lamb-like Wilhelm Weitling. But *Christian Socialism* is not simply a chronicle. Cort has a more urgent purpose: to reconcile his religious and political commitments. With his carefully qualified definition of socialism, emphasizing self-management and decentralization, and his energetic, ingenious search for religious forebears, Cort seems to want to justify the ways of Christianity to socialists, to demonstrate that the church is hospitable to the loftiest secular ideals.

This argument emerges most fully in his provocative penultimate chapter, "The Convergence of Socialism and Catholicism." The convergence of *what?* Of socialism and *l'infame?* Of Catholicism and that "wicked and perverse doctrine" (Pope Gregory XVI), that "grave and pernicious error" (Pope Leo XIII)? These imprecations are a century old, and more. Cort suggests that both socialists and popes have learned a great deal in the interval: the former about the dangers of centralized state control over the economy; the latter about the evils of unregulated private ownership and the benefits of worker and peasant associations. For example, according to the 1951 Frankfurt Declaration of the Socialist International, "socialist planning does not presuppose public ownership of all the means of production," and "does not mean that all economic decisions are placed in the hands of the government or central authorities." These statements go a long way toward meeting Catholics' natural-law-based objections to the universal abolition of private property. Conversely, the sequence of papal encyclicals from *Rerum novarum* (Leo XIII, 1891) to *Laborem exercens* (John Paul II, 1981) have progressively modified the church's reluctance to commend collective ownership, until John Paul declared that "one cannot exclude the *socialization,* in suitable conditions, of certain means of production." [Emphasis in original.] Cort contends that there is now "no *essential* difference between Catholic social teaching and the Frankfurt Declaration" of the Socialist International. "Economic democracy," all but explicitly affirmed in the American bishops' 1986 pastoral letter, will be the eventual formula of reconciliation, the kiss of peace, between saint and socialist.

But alas, a few obstacles remain. Socialism is both a sentiment and an insight, an ideal and an analysis. The sentiment may be described as humanism or egalitarianism or solidarity or a desire to further the full, free development of every man

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and woman. (I prefer Oscar Wilde's term in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism": "the new Individualism.") Cort has shown that, differences over philosophical materialism notwithstanding, for the most urgent political purposes Christian humanism is indistinguishable from socialist humanism.

But the socialist insight is also indispensable. The singular contribution of Marx (whom Cort disparages relentlessly, and wrongheadedly, as a statist) was to demonstrate the global, integrative character of capitalism. Once the cycle of competition and technological innovation is set in motion, concentration is inevitable, and with it, disequilibrium—i.e., vast human misery. Greed has something, but by no means everything, to do with this process. Capitalist crisis is not merely a sin; it is also a problem. And whatever the solution, it must be able to assimilate without suppressing the powerful centralizing, and locally destabilizing, tendencies of innovation. It must, that is, be a global solution.

It is not clear that Cort and John Paul II fully appreciate this. Immediately after the sentence quoted earlier from *Laborem exercens,* the pope explained: "We can speak of socializing only . . . on the basis of his work each person is fully entitled to consider himself a part-owner of the great workbench at which he is working with everyone else." With characteristic papal ambiguity, John Paul leaves the metaphorical status of "workbench" open; the hard question, as I have suggested, is to determine what level and form of worker ownership can match capitalism's dynamism and mobility. With characteristic directness, Cort remarks: "Eric Gill, the English artist-craftsman-writer . . . wrote a sentence that has stuck with me ever since and still symbolizes my own favorite brand of socialism: 'People work best when they own and control their own tools and materials.' " If Cort means, as he appears to, "*individually* owns and controls," then this seems a step over the line that separates a proper appreciation of human scale from nostalgia.

And there is another, less theoretical obstacle to unity of spirit between most socialists and "theologically conservative" (his own description) Christians like Cort. Throughout *Christian Socialism* Cort refers, rightly, to Matthew 25: 31–46. Though the few authorities I've consulted doubt its authenticity, it is, whoever conceived it, surely one of the great passages in Scripture, indeed in all of literature:

> For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me.
>
> Then the just will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee; or thirsty, and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and take thee in; or naked, and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee sick, or in prison, and come to thee?
>
> And he will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

Cort calls this passage the "end and summation of Jesus' teaching," and emphasizes that "it is not built around the usual sins and virtues." Above all, "there is nothing about sex in it."

Nor is there anything about the sanctity of life in the womb. If within a mere two thousand years, abortion was to become a problem so urgent as to require the near exclusive political activity of the Church, could the omniscient Redeemer have failed even to hint at this in the "summation" of his teaching?

And unfortunately, "near exclusive" is no exaggeration. The Catholic bishops have established diocesan, regional, and parish pro-life committees, encouraged the formation of political action committees, engaged in a great deal of direct lobbying, and sternly disciplined lay and clerical dissidents. By contrast, the action recommendations appended to the bishops' pastoral letter on the economy were timid and tentative, and accompanied by an expression of concern that "in [economic policy] debates . . . we as Catholics not become polarized." In the light of this enormous disparity of commitment between one cause and the other, it seems plain what the Roman Catholic hierarchy, at least, really cares about. I have no wish to bait the bishops, or Cort, but comradeship compels candor: to many secular socialists, this vast disproportion is a scandal.

Cort undoubtedly considers himself a loyal son of the Church, but it is impossible for even the most disenchanted apostate to feel a similar ambivalence about the author of *Christian Socialism*. With characteristic generosity, Cort observes that Michael Harrington "lost his faith and now describes himself as a 'Catholic atheist.' His commitment to Christ's poor, however, would put most Catholics to shame." Cort's own commitment, and this excellent book, should do his fellow Catholics proud. □

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David J. Garrow

CIVIL RIGHTS POTPOURRI

PARTING THE WATERS: AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS, 1954–63, by Taylor Branch. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988. 1064 pp. $24.95.

Taylor Branch's massive *Parting the Waters*—922 pages of narrative text—aspires to be "a history of the civil rights movement" formed out of "knitting together a number of personal stories," first and foremost that of Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch emphasizes that the book is "not a biography"—for he goes out of his way to consider other activists, especially the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Bob Moses—but he nonetheless builds the book around King, declaring at the outset "[M]y thesis that King's life is the best and most important metaphor for American history in the watershed postwar years."

Notwithstanding the scope of the book, *Parting the Waters* does not in actuality sustain a clear organizing perspective or orienting theme, and the book's many virtues are constantly in danger of being swamped by its sheer size and inclusiveness. Branch is a good writer who has mined many of the important archives and interviewed a considerable number of the surviving actors, but at its core the book has only its chronological progression with which to bring the reader along. Many of Branch's textual strong points—his almost punch-by-punch rendition of the Freedom Rides, his beautifully evocative portrait of the penultimate Birmingham demonstrations in the spring of 1963—stand solidly on their own, but no consistent interpretive perspective links or interrelates them.

The crux of the problem is that Branch fails to offer a clearly articulated portrait of King, his central character. This is not to say that any of his major points about King are themselves seriously flawed, for they are not. Whether the subject is King's academically formative experience at Crozer Theological Seminary and his encounter with the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, or his tremendously important friendship with white New York lawyer Stanley D. Levison, or King's complicated and multilayered private life, Branch is a careful and trustworthy interpreter. However, at least to this reader, Branch does not offer a truly interwoven portrait of King, either because he is not fully certain what to make of the man or perhaps because he is not convinced that all of King's seemingly disparate parts actually fit together.

Some King scholars, principally this reviewer and James H. Cone, have sought to use King's own tangible sense of calling and of mission—his belief that his civil rights leadership role was an obligation bestowed upon him by Jesus and by God—as the central organizing principle for understanding King's life. One need not agree with that in order to engage King's meaning, but Branch seems relatively unattuned to or uninterested in King's religious faith and spiritual life, even while manifesting an excellent understanding of the practical importance of black church politics—Rev. J. H. Jackson's National Baptist Convention—in King's career. Branch's few passing comments on King's inner life are generally on the mark, but he does not weave them into a clear or consciously articulated portrait of King the man.

Branch's picture of the many sets of actors who made up the early southern civil rights movement is generally quite solid, though his apparent unfamiliarity with some scholarly works, e.g., Mills Thornton's landmark analysis of the Montgomery bus boycott, detracts from its ultimate completeness. An academic reader can pick some small bones—Hulan Jack was the black borough president of Manhattan, not a white Unitarian church leader, who was Homer Jack; South Africa's Nobel Peace Prize winner was Albert Luthuli, not "Lithuli"; Jerome Cavanagh, not "James Cavenaugh," was the mayor of Detroit—but with these few exceptions this is a remarkably error-free book. There are likewise a few small matters of interpretation with which one can take serious issue. Branch seems to believe that "guile" (defined by one dictionary as "deceitful cunning, duplicity") was a major factor in the movement, for he uses the word to characterize King, SNCC activists' use of music, and Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers, but again this sort of problem is notable mostly for the very few occasions on which such questions of usage or interpretation appear.

Notwithstanding a few such dubious shadings—Branch also twice speaks of King and his black Baptist church allies as "fellow conspirators"—*Parting the Waters* is commendable for its clear-eyed understanding of some of King's complexities. Branch notes how King sometimes experienced "a turbulent conflict over the relationship between the public and private person" and says quite accurately that "it was never comfortable for a man who spoke all his life of consuming guilt to be held up as a public saint." Such comments are on the mark, but they are relatively rare, for Branch never pauses long

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enough to offer any comprehensive view of how King's complexities interacted. He says at one point that one side of the private King featured "instability, fury, wanton merriment, and profane despair," but the characterization, while reflecting considerable truth, requires more discussion than Branch gives it.

Perhaps Branch's best portraits and insights concern not King and the southern movement but their most frequent interlocutors, the Kennedy brothers. Branch goes out of his way to involve the Kennedys as fully as possible in his story, but he rarely spares their actions toward the southern movement the critical treatment they richly deserve but seldom receive. Branch's accumulated brush strokes, particularly with regard to John Kennedy, capture nicely the mix of detachment and reserve with which the top men in "Camelot" actually dealt with King and other civil rights activists. That much popular history, or at least its received impact, leaves untouched the long-standing fiction that the Kennedys were enthusiastic supporters if not downright sponsors of early 1960's civil rights activism is regrettable; but Branch's portrait represents at least a modestly corrective step. "In death," he writes cogently, "the late President gained credit for much of the purpose that King's movement had forced upon him in life."

Parting the Waters is a solid and commendable piece of work, but it is a book unlikely to stimulate any strong reactions one way or the other, at least among knowledgeable students of the civil rights movement. Somewhat disappointingly there is virtually no new factual information in it—about King, about Levision's complicated and once-controversial past, or about the stratagems of either the Kennedys or the ubiquitous J. Edgar Hoover—but it does offer extremely valuable portraits of many activists and local movements, e.g., Greenwood, Mississippi, whose contributions to the southern struggle are not widely known outside of the small circles of movement alumni and civil rights scholars.

In the end, however, *Parting the Waters* is a book whose valuable contributions are truncated by the absence of any overarching theme. At his closing point, in November 1963, Branch offers what seems to be his two- or three-sentence long-term overview of the movement. "The reaction to Kennedy's assassination . . . enable[d] the movement to institutionalize its major gains before receding. . . . Kennedy's murder marked the arrival of the freedom surge, just as King's own death four years hence marked its demise." If this is to be taken as Branch's shorthand summation, with "major gains" meaning the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and perhaps the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as well, it errs in at least two, and perhaps three, particulars. A fuller weighing of the political history of the 1964 Act is required before one attributes its passage largely to reactions to Kennedy's death, and "the arrival of the freedom surge" was marked not by the November assassination but, as Branch's own narrative beautifully shows, by the dramatic national impact of the Birmingham demonstrations six months earlier. Lastly, the movement's later demise, as was quite clear at the time but is not always the case in retrospective accounts, had very largely run its course well prior to King's own death in Memphis. Thus, while *Parting the Waters* offers some excellent portrayals of the people and events that made up the southern movement's history between 1954 and 1963, it does not provide any interpretive perspective that students of the era will find new or challenging. □

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The Unions and Foreign Policy

Editors:

How strange it is to find that a new pamphlet (hardly a book), whose authors Daniel Cantor and Juliet Schor repeat much of an attack I launched on the AFL-CIO leadership some twenty years ago, is praised in *Dissent* (Summer 1988, *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America*) for "asking all the right questions" and for examining "them with the rigorous and honest intelligence they deserve." Perhaps the praise heaped upon this new polemic by Alan Howard is not surprising, given that the authors thank him in their acknowledgments as being among those friends who "helped us to write, and rewrite, this book."

One must begin by pointing out that Howard's summary of AFL-CIO policy is grossly unfair. The Department of International Affairs' (DIA) position is not that claimed by him. Having recently returned from giving a speech to the San Francisco regional conference on international affairs sponsored by the DIA, I can report that its policy is one based on opposition to all regimes that suppress workers' freedom—be they totalitarian states of the left or right-wing authoritarian regimes such as that of Pinochet in Chile. As a recent DIA publication puts it, "the AFL-CIO is guided by a single standard" whether it comes to aiding "the black South African trade union movement, or assisting Nicaraguan unions under attack by the Sandinistas, or giving Poland's *Solidarnosc* union printing presses, or assisting Salvadoran labor against assaults by rightist death squads and leftist guerrillas."

It is, morever, scandalous and completely false for Howard to assert that "the DIA signed up early in the Reagan administration's crusade against Nicaragua, trying like the devil to pull together an opposition labor front to work in conjunction with the *contras* to bring down the Sandinista government." That comment reveals his failure to understand the context of internal events in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have for some years seen free labor unions as their main opponents. Since 1985, the Sandinistas' war against their own people has broken out full fold. As the *New York Times* reported last April, "[L]abor conflict . . . is reaching its highest level since the 1979 revolution." Government-organized goon squads—the so-called *turbas*—regularly beat up civic opposition leaders and break strikes. Indeed, two labor organizers were killed when Sandinista patrols fired at protesters marching to a labor rally in rural Matagalpa last March. Any labor protest is met with the charge that trade unionists are CIA agents or, as Daniel Ortega put it, "servile lackeys of the bourgeoisie and American imperialism." Most recently, in July of 1988, the Sandinistas banned a major protest march led by trade unions, arrested CTN leader Carlos Huembes, and tear gassed and beaten demonstrators engaged in nonviolent peaceful protest.

The reality of Sandinista rule, ironically, has been most aptly described by the veteran Communist leader of the construction workers, who told Stephen Kinzer that "the Sandinistas have achieved the impossible. They have united the opposition against them and turned the popular classes into supporters of the right." It is in this context that AIFLD and the AFL-CIO have acted to support democratic trade unionists in CUS and the CTN, who are defending the rights of workers and against all odds are trying to keep alive free trade unions.

Cantor and Schor, whose facts Howard accepts, twist the truth when they accuse CUS of being "identified with Somoza" and of being a "company union" because it is part of the coalition of civic opposition to the FSLN. The facts are that CUS's chief, Louis Medrano Flores, was assassinated by the Somocista Guard in 1979, and its current head, Alvin Guthrie, was a member of the first Sandinista Council of State. CUS, as Guthrie states, "gave without reservation our support to that war waged by the FSLN." If there is a company union in Nicaragua today, it is the one organized by the Sandinista party—which opposes strikes and militant action—not the few remaining unions independent of state and party control.

As a front-page article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Clifford Krauss on AIFLD reported in 1985, AIFLD money has helped CUS agricultural projects and cooperatives survive, despite Sandinista attempts to strangle them. "Despite all that," the article continued, "the CUS *opposes* U.S. aid to the *contras* as counterproductive" (my emphasis). But like the Sandinistas, whose logic he seems to have adopted, Howard prefers to repeat the slander that vigorous opposition to the Sandinistas is akin to support of the *contras* and an attempt to overthrow the government.

In their slim volume, Cantor and Schor treat European socialists and social democrats as pro–Wall Street conservatives, while the "left wing unions" in postwar Europe supposedly had a "vision of a better world." They refer here, evidently, to unions like the French CGT, which supported Stalinism, including the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and martial law in Poland against *Solidarnosc*. Admitting that these unions were "politically subservient to Moscow," they nevertheless praise them for being composed of "militant unionists who fought hard to protect jobs and wages," rather than support the Marshall Plan, which caused them to be isolated from "progressive causes." It is

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predictable that the authors now oppose the same kind of aid to democratic unions in Central America that the AFL-CIO gave to their counterparts in Western Europe at the end of World War II and write as if the "left" unions are models of democracy.

And while chastising DIA for citing a changing list of "good" and "bad" unions in El Salvador, Howard says little about the ways in which revolutionary dual unions are created not to defend workers' rights, but to destabilize a fragile political structure in order to promote insurrection. Committed to waging "prolonged popular war," new proguerrilla unions attempt to exploit legitimate grievances of workers in order to promote armed struggle. As the Communist guerrilla leader Shafik Handal recently explained in a new twist on Lenin, "[T]he labor movement, . . . when unconnected to revolutionary armed struggle, will degenerate into trade union economism or simply stagnate." The purpose of FMLN-affiliated unions was best explained by journalist Chris Hedges in the *Dallas Morning News* as a strategy to "foment a popular insurrection against the government in the next two years." One suspects that Howard's real agenda is not to urge a more tolerant and broad definition of what a legitimate union is upon the AFL-CIO, but to gain acceptance and legitimacy for revolutionary dual unions that pose as bona fide trade unions. He would prefer that the AFL-CIO stop helping unions like CUS and instead come to the aid of the Sandinista-front union, the guerrilla-backed UNTS in El Salvador, and the procommunist KMT in the Philippines. But instead of saying this up front, the reviewer engages in a dishonest polemic that masks his true intent.

In treating the issue as solely one of AFL-CIO perfidy, it is Cantor, Schor, and reviewer Howard who truly have displayed tunnel vision.

Alan Howard Replies:

Ronald Radosh must think people are awfully stupid. How else to explain his professed outrage at the notion of the DIA looking favorably on the exploits of Ronald Reagan's *contra* "freedom fighters"? It's hard to believe he missed those full-page *New York Times* and *Washington Post* ads signed by AIFLD Director William Dougherty and other AFL-CIO officials calling for aid to the *contras*.

Radosh fares no better with his regurgitation of the DIA line on El Salvador. Anyone interested in pursuing this sad chapter in the history of American labor's foreign policy would do well to read the recent "Labor Rights in El Salvador" (Americas Watch, 36 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036), AIFLD's critique of that report (AFL-CIO, 815 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006), and the Americas Watch rebuttal. Reading these documents is to weep for the movement of Debs.

I confess to being one of the sixty-three people listed in the acknowledgments of *Tunnel Vision*. My sympathy with its outlook is relevant, as are Radosh's cross-country jaunts on behalf of the DIA. Anyone who cares about the health of the labor movement today has taken sides in this debate, which is why this little book has caused such a commotion.

It does indeed make many of the same telling points on the folly of the "total absorption of American labor leaders in the ideology of Cold War liberalism," in the words of a younger and perhaps more idealistic Ronald Radosh. The difference is that while Radosh's scholarly tome, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy,* attacked progressive leaders like Walter Reuther for not thinking more like Ronald Radosh, *Tunnel Vision* demonstrates a sensitivity to the pressures and concerns that the heirs of that progressive tradition face today. And unlike the despair that Radosh expressed twenty years ago about the labor movement ever reforming itself, *Tunnel Vision* sees that change coming and is written in a way to help it along.

Perfidy is Professor Radosh's word, one of many in his letter that seem calculated to poison democratic debate on this subject within the labor movement. Let us hope those days are gone. □

Student Voice

Editors:

I was too young to have participated in the events of the 1960s. In his article "The New Student Radicals" (Fall 1988), W. E. Scheuerman makes some good points about why a student movement today might be different. However, I still do not want to see its revival.

I will never forgive the left for its almost complete silence over Afghanistan. Where were the teach-ins, books, articles, and demonstrations? Why didn't students (worldwide) take to the streets as they did during the Vietnam War? I guess they were too busy talking about Nicaragua. Finally, why can't everyone at least wait until the Soviet Union has completely withdrawn from Afghanistan before declaring Gorbachev a man of peace? Nothing less would have been accepted from an American president.

I consider myself a liberal, not a radical. I guess I just don't have the mentality that becomes outraged when Russia is called an Evil Empire and yet can sit quietly in an auditorium while the United States is called everything under the sun. It is because *Dissent* doesn't share this kind of mentality either that I have decided to take out a subscription.

Kathleen Vullis
Flushing, N.Y. □

Campaign Coverage

Editors:

How grateful we are to have this magazine visit our home to bring its good sense and support to all we believe in during these difficult times.

Professors Howe's and Walzer's essays (Summer 1988, "*The Jackson Campaign*") express clearly and concisely the reasons many of us did not support the Jackson candidacy.

Professor Kilson's piece needs correction on an important fact: Despite the fact that Bernard Epton, who

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ran against the late Mayor Washington (in Chicago) was Jewish, 40 percent of the Jews voted for Washington—the highest percentage the Mayor received from any white group in the city. Sadly, the Washington coalition has been undermined since his passing.

JEWEL BELLUSH
Great Neck, N.Y. □

Arabs and Racism

Editors:

In the May 7 issue of the *Nation* I was accused of moral insensitivity by Alexander Cockburn, which is like having been accused of murder by Stalin: People might be expected to know that either the charge was fabricated or the crime was justified. It did not occur to me to respond.

Now the editors of *Dissent* have leveled at me the identical accusation, in language even more reminiscent of the purge years. On the basis of the very same single sentence cited by Cockburn, and with no reference to the article or the argument in question, they not only accuse me of racism and "that dehumanization of the adversary that has been a curse of our century," but they accuse *Commentary*, the magazine of which I am proud to be a contributor, of intellectual vulgarity and political reaction! It is so curious to find this tactic of discreditation, once perfected by the Communist press, in a magazine that proclaims itself opposed to totalitarianism that one must inquire into its cause. Indeed, that is precisely what I have been doing in the pages of *Commentary* for about a decade, and particularly in the article that so claimed the attention of the editors. It must have given offense not to the Arabs, as they pretended, but to those who recognized themselves as the subject of my analysis.

My article on "Israel and the Intellectuals: A Failure of Nerve?" *(Commentary*, May 1988) discussed the success the Arabs enjoy in their anti-Israel propaganda war, which remains largely unopposed by Jewish intellectuals both in Israel and America. The equation of Zionism with racism was a brilliant offensive weapon since it not only obscured continuing Arab opposition to Israel but held the Jews responsible for the very evil they had been trying to alleviate. The adoption by the Arabs in the early 1970s of the language of the left rather than the language of the right reopened the whole question of Jewish national legitimacy that the creation of the State of Israel had briefly put to rest. Because this pressure from the left already succeeded in the 1930s in demoralizing Jewish intellectuals—forcing them to distinguish between themselves, the good Jews, and the Zionist bad Jews—it is not difficult to trace, and even to predict, the attempt of left-leaning intellectuals today to distinguish once again between themselves, the good Jews who want only the "legitimate Israel," and the Zionist bad Jews who want an illegitimate Israel, in response to a new campaign of delegitimation. A Jewish country under siege puts great pressure on other Jews to protect it, pressure that marginal Jews (intellectuals foremost among them) resent and that even affiliated Jews regret. As *Dissent* has been kind enough to bring my writing to the attention of its readers, those who still think for themselves may take the trouble of reading and, if they wish, of challenging my argument for themselves.

Not for a moment do I believe that the editors of *Dissent* really suspect me of racism because I wrote that "Palestinian Arabs . . . breed and bleed and advertise their misery." Guilty as the phrase may be of facile alliteration, its obvious point was to introduce the power of Palestinian Arab reality—people who multiply just as the demographers say they do; people who suffer as in Shylock's "Doth not a Jew *bleed*?"; and people whose misery is also cultivated by their fellow Arabs and used as an offensive weapon against the Jews. There is nothing slighting in my attitude to the Arabs. To the contrary. I seem to be almost alone in crediting them with very high intelligence in waging their war against the Jewish state. I take their declared enmity with full seriousness, not because I minimize their humanity, but because I fully understand how much they want to achieve regional hegemony. The real charge of dehumanization should be leveled at those who patronize the Arabs by pretending that they are liberal Jews.

Dissent, however, finds it more convenient to posture morally against an invented Jewish bigot than to oppose the humiliating, damaging, and overtly racist campaign that has been launched by the Arabs against Israel and the Jewish people. It is also easier to resort to the intellectual vulgarity of defamation than to deal cogently with the painful questions I tried to raise. Since I write this on the eve of the Jewish New Year, let me wish all Jews and Arabs and the editors of *Dissent* only such manifestations of racism and dehumanization as mine in the years ahead.

RUTH R. WISSE
Montreal, Que.

IRVING HOWE Replies:

It is sad that our correspondent sees nothing wrong, let alone repugnant, in the sentence about the Arabs that she wrote. Were it only a matter of alliteration. . . . □

Corrections

In my essay "Conservatives Stumble into the Future" (Fall 1988), I say toward the end, "Podhoretz, for his part, compared Gorbachev to Hitler." I should have said: "Podhoretz, for his part, compared Gorbachev's Russia to a sanitized Nazi Germany."

JOHN B. JUDIS
Washington, D.C. □

In my article, "Dependent Individualism" (Fall 1988) I referred to Roger Simon and should have written Jonathan Simon, a member of the Berkeley Center for the Study of Law and Society.

FRED SIEGEL
Brooklyn, N.Y. □

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